



A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF WOMEN ARTISANS OF SRINAGAR

**ABSTRACT
THESIS**

SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

Doctor of Philosophy

IN

SOCIOLOGY

BY

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2000

ABSTRACT

Examining the relationship of women to economy is central to women's studies. Economy is a very important aspect of our life. It determines a person's position in society and is believed to give him / her power and dominance. There is a widespread belief that women in India have been economically dependent on their male relations from times immemorial. The society has perceived women to be confined to house-keeping, making no considerable economic contributions for the management and up-keep of family life. It is being argued that the modernization process has improved their employment position by providing them educational opportunities and granting them certain basic rights. However, this description of women's contribution to human society and economy is a highly misleading assessment of the historical role of women. The modernization process has inducted a considerable number of women belonging to upper and middle classes of society into the salaried class. However, the overwhelming majority of our rural women have historically played a significant role in the development of economy and society. For centuries they have been performing multiple and major economic roles both within and outside the

family. These women have always worked larger hours than men have, but their work has always remained hidden and has never been recognised nor have they been paid at par with their male counterparts.

One of the crucial methodological problems pertaining to women's household work is what has been called by leading scholars of women's studies as 'invisibility phenomenon'. As a matter of fact, women are engaged in a complex web of household activities and there are no readymade criteria on the basis of which women's household work can be conceptualized, defined, classified, quantified and documented. Women's household work is actually comprised of a plethora of activities. These activities consume the time and energy of women, but owing to long-drawn-out ideological and societal moorings and predilections, these activities are not deemed to be productive or remunerative. Therefore, they do not figure in any governmental or non-governmental analysis and evaluation. of work, e.g. women prepare food, clean and maintain dwelling places, reproduce and rear children, maintain social relationships, cater to common friends and relatives, care for elderly people, exchange presents on festivals and ritual occasions, extend invitations and provide hospitality, fetch water and fire wood and engage in multifaceted

works concerning their husbands. Women's contributions in these and similar activities is of immense significance for the very survival of social, political, economic, moral and civilizational aspects of human existence. These activities are of foundational importance.

The household is the reference point of women's lives. Women are deeply inter-twinned with the household. Sociologists and anthropologists have been perennially studying the institution of household. The earlier sociological and anthropological focus on household did try to analyse its role in forging kin solidarity, socialisation, internalization of cultural values, norms etc. However, presently Sociologists are emphasizing the role of the household within the larger socio-economic order. The macro features of national and international socio-economic order such as systems of production, exchange of resources and access to resources do ultimately impinge on the shape of households in modern societies. The productive activities and incomes of the households are largely determined by these systemic features of the situation. However, within the precincts of the households the position of women is additionally determined by a host of factors; for example, her being in urban or rural sector, her belonging to a lower caste or higher caste, her coming from an upper class or a lower class, her being landed or

landless etc., are vital factors that determine the position of a woman within a given household. However, what is of most crucial importance in determining the status of a woman within a household is her job or career or occupation and its net cash-value.

Work is the ultimate determining factor in the modern household. Work is a defining, a characterising and an identifying force in the modern world. It shapes our physical and emotional needs, establishes our identity, and determines our economic position and hierarchies us in the complex web of social stratification. Our work determines the conditions under which we spend our countless productive hours. Thus work is the most important determinant of our quality of life.

Work as productive economic activity has always determined the social and political position of a person. For example, shorn of all meta-physical and normative trappings the ancient Indian four fold division of society was based on the nature and type of work done by numerous castes and sub-castes. However, with increasing industrialization and technologisation, the scope and extent of work has become multi-complex. Technology has opened up a vast area of sophisticated managerial, administrative and supervisory jobs in the fields of engineering, commerce, trade, management etc., that we

need highly accomplished specialists for these modern jobs. In the modern economies of Western Europe, Northern America and South Eastern parts of Asia, highly complex and exceedingly technologically sophisticated jobs are being created day in and day out.

The highly sophisticated industrial and technological occupations in Kashmir are yet to emerge. Even after the end of twentieth century, the economy of Kashmir is based on agriculture and handicrafts. It is categorically a pre-industrial, a pre-technological, and a pre-modern economy. In this economy women have been making a highly significant contribution both in the agricultural and handicraft sectors.

The role of Kashmiri women in agricultural sector has always been of vital significance. Historically speaking they have always been engaged in seeding and weeding, transplanting, transporting and collecting operations of agricultural produce, apart from engaging themselves in allied activities such as animal husbandry, poultry, fetching of fire wood and water etc. The urban women especially in Srinagar city have traditionally been actively engaged in various handicrafts such as *shawl* , *Namdah* , *chain stitch* , *Crewel*, *Gubbah*, *shahtoosh* and *pushmina spinning* , *carpet weaving*, *papier –machie* etc.

For centuries Kashmir has earned tremendous fame due to its handicrafts. The beauty of Kashmir is incomplete without a mention of its handicrafts. This industry is one of the big employers of the State. There are around 3 Lac artisans involved in different crafts. Though both men and women are equally involved in producing marvelous pieces of exquisite quality and craftsmanship, there are certain crafts in which women's role is predominant and in some crafts men are mostly predominant. However, the irony is that the number of women vis-à-vis men in a particular craft is not known despite the fact that State Directorate of Handicrafts has worked out an overall estimation of the artisans involved in the handicraft industry. In addition to this there are a number of artisans a particularly woman who have adopted it as a household occupation and whose strength is virtually difficult to assess. The handicraft industry of Kashmir is an export-oriented industry. It contributes a lot to State Economy and earns a considerable amount of foreign exchange for the nation. The present study attempts to highlight the role played by women in the Handicraft Sector.

The rural women's work on family farms for long hours and also in handicraft sector, particularly in slack season, cannot be overlooked. At the same time, it is

imperative to know how does an urban woman, (usually an illiterate, semi educated or at times educated to a certain level), earn to supplement the family income. The contribution of these urban women to their family income, particularly in a patriarchal society, that discourages the freedom and liberty to women, always remains invisible. Therefore, the present study is an effort towards an analysis and classification of the ‘invisibility phenomenon’ of urban women’s work; its nature and its relationship with the family income in particular and the total state economy in general. The focus of the present study is the urban Muslim women of Srinagar city. These women are mostly clustered in the high-density areas of old city.

Objectives of the Study

Though the broad research objective of the present evaluation was to throw light on the role played by women in the Handicraft Sector, the specific objectives around which the present study was built are:

- To analyse the socio-economic and educational background of artisan women.
- To analyse the nature and type of work done by them.

- To discover the wages/earnings of the female artisans engaged in different handicrafts.
- To ascertain the control over the earnings of the female artisans.
- To explore the conditions under which the female artisans have opted for this role.
- To analyse the duality of role and the problems faced by the female artisans.
- To analyse the role of female artisans in the decision-making process of the family.
- To study the perceptions /aspirations of the female artisans vis-à-vis job satisfaction, rights of Muslim women, education and changing role of women.

Research Procedure Followed

Keeping in view the objectives of the study an elaborate research design was prepared and executed. The various aspects of the research design pertained to the important demographic features of the universe/sample frame, sampling procedure, research tools, data administration procedures and other details.

Keeping in view the objectives of the study, the combined method of both quantitative and qualitative in-depth studies was used. A sample of two hundred artisan women was selected randomly from the down town area of

Srinagar, 190 artisan women for quantitative analysis and 10 women for case studies. For the first level of the study i.e. quantitative analysis, interview schedule with both closed and open ended questions was constructed and administered to the respondents. The researcher personally interviewed all the respondents and recorded their responses. For the second level i.e. the qualitative analysis, case studies were conducted. For this focus interviews of artisan women were held in their own settings. Some middlemen/ dealers were also interviewed in order to understand the working pattern of the industry.

Findings:

The analysis of the quantitative data was divided into three sections.

Section I namely 'Artisan Women : Socio-economic and Educational Background' revealed that these women came from lower socio-economic background. Most of them were either illiterate or semi literate. However, the educational level of unmarried female artisans was marginally higher than married female artisans. This is so owing to the fact that overwhelming majority of the female artisans were in the age group of 15-25 years and therefore they had been exposed relatively to higher education during the last two decades of the previous century. The analysis further revealed that 63.41

% husbands of married female artisans, 75.92% fathers and 100 % mothers of unmarried artisan women were totally illiterate and remaining 36.59 % husbands of married female artisans and 24.8% fathers of unmarried female artisans were barely literate or semi literate. The husbands and fathers in respective categories were either petty businessmen or small shopkeepers or artisans. Majority of the husbands of married artisan women and fathers of the unmarried artisan women were in the lower income group earning between rupees 1,000 to 3,000 per month.

Majority of the female artisans had one male earning member. However in case of unmarried female artisans majority had more than one female earning member, whereas married female artisans had only one female earning member in majority of the cases, i.e. themselves. This phenomenon leads to a disparity in total respective incomes of married and unmarried female artisans. Whereas majority of the married artisans live within the income group of Rs. 3001-5000 per month, the unmarried female artisans live within relatively higher income group of Rs. 5001-7000 per month.

The study further showed that the tradition of joint family system is on the verge of extinction in view of the fact that about 87.89 % female artisans lived in nuclear

type of family units. Most of the family units comprised of 3 to 4 family members. However, the patriarchal system in these families remained, by and large intact. Most of the families of these female artisans were headed by male members.

The section II namely 'Artisan Women: Work and Family' bring out that most of the female artisans of Srinagar were engaged in embroidery, and spinning operations. Coming from a lower socio-economic background these poor and illiterate artisans are engaged in long daily grinds that fetch them little in terms of monetary benefits. Most of them work from 6 to 12 hours daily and their incomes range from Rs.700 upto Rs. 1500 per month. Even this meagre income is very vital for the upkeep of their hearths. Their entire earnings are spent on domestic requirements. As all these artisans are working in un-organised sector, the mode of payment is completely unregulated and depends upon respective bargaining capacity of both the artisan women and the middlemen. A large chunk of the profits is appropriated by the middlemen and the wholesale dealers and exporters. These artisan women are conscious of their low wages, but still continue with their jobs in view of the fact that they have no better alternative to go in for. In response to the question as to whether they were satisfied with jobs the

majority of them nod affirmatively, but a deeper probing of their conditions revealed that they would readily go in for a better option, only if it was available. These artisan women are over burdened with their handicraft work coupled with their multiple domestic responsibilities. The married artisans are further over-loaded with such duties as child-rearing, cooking, washing, cleaning and other chores of day-to-day maintenance. Consequently the married women artisans have less leisure time in comparison to unmarried ones.

The married artisan women who do find some leisure time spend it by taking rest/nap after the lunch. Whereas the unmarried artisan women chat, relax, watch TV etc. during their leisure time. The outings of the artisan women consist of going to nearby market, visiting relatives or attending marriage parties etc. They go for outing either once in a week or once in a month. However, a considerable percentage of female artisans go for outings either occasionally or rarely and 3.15 % female artisan women never come out of their homes. Majority of them reported that they never visit any picnic spot. To know whether the female artisans take any part in the decision-making process of the family, a wide gap was found between the responses of married and unmarried artisan women. The data reveals that 39.02% married

artisan women do take part in the decision making process whereas almost the same percentage i.e. 36.58% just give their consent. The majority of the unmarried artisans do not take part in any decision making process and it is mostly their fathers who take decisions either independently or in certain cases seek the advice of their mothers.

Section III namely 'Artisan Women: Perceptions & Aspirations' yielded the following responses:

With regard to gender discrimination, 61.05 % women artisans confirmed that gender discrimination does exist within home and society, and the rest of the respondents either denied this fact or did not say any thing in this regard. It seemed that they had internalized the traditional values too strongly to give any positive or negative response. The perceptions and aspirations of the unmarried artisans were more egalitarian than married artisan women as majority of them advocated that husband and wife should have an equal status within the family.

Significant change was not found in the perceptions of married and unmarried artisan women with regard to the factors that could have fetched them a better job and also regarding the job opportunities available to men and women. Further, majority of the respondents favoured

handicraft sector to be the best that could have happened to them within the four walls of their home, but at the same time none of them wanted their son or daughter to follow their profession except a small percentage of 7.31 percent married artisan women. Most of them wished their children to be highly educated leaving their final placement to be decided by fate/God.

Furthermore, contrary to the hypothesis, the female artisans were aware about their rights, but most of them preferred to go by customary law.

Qualitative Analysis

The purpose of including case studies was not to give any statistical precision, but to give a feel about the life of the artisan women. Therefore, the case-material is presented in a biographical form, which is quite revealing and self-explanatory. A gist of the interviews of the middle-men is also presented in the same form.

These individual case histories confirm our findings from quantitative analysis. The main conclusions one can draw from these cases are:

1. The artisan women mostly come from lower economic and educational background.
2. Artisan women do the handicraft work due to economic necessity. When male members earn less, then it is the

responsibility of a woman to supplement and raise the economic status of the family.

3. The day in the life of most of the artisan women is quite hectic. Her domestic and handicraft work goes on simultaneously and she hardly finds anytime to rest.
4. Women are aware about their exploitation and inadequate wages, but cannot stop work as it is important and vital for their very sustenance.

An interface with the agents and dealers revealed that they enjoy the monopoly of the trade, the women artisans are the real workers and the agents, merchants and the exporters are the exploiters. All of them take their share of exploitation. The agents' share is also limited. Big merchants and the exporters are the real beneficiaries.



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D. No.....

Dated.....

This is to certify that the work embodied in this thesis entitled
“ A Sociological Study of Women Artisans of Srinagar ” is the original
research work carried out by Ms. Salima Jan under my supervision. It
is suitable for submission for the award of Ph. D. degree in Sociology


Dr. (Mrs.) Rashida R. Siddqi

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PREFACE

Contemporary sociological research is increasingly debating the problems and prospects pertaining to women as a gender. In fact, the sociology of gender has emerged as a powerful area of sociological investigation. The role of women in societies, politics and economies of various parts of the globe is being recognized as vital to the very survival of human civilization. Countless studies detailing the inestimable contributions made by women have been carried out in American and European continents. Asian and African Sociologists have also been conducting significant studies regarding the role of women in our times. The last quarter of the Twentieth Century has witnessed exponential growth of Women's Studies in India. The underlying assumption of all these studies is that owing to multiple ideological pulls and pressures the crucial social, political and economic role of women has been grossly underestimated by official institutions of patriarchal establishment. In view of the same, the role of women in the sustenance and survival of civilization has largely remained invisible. The aim of Women's Studies is to bring out a methodologically informed account of the seminal contributions made by women. It is hoped that such an account will be instrumental in highlighting the invisibility phenomenon of women's work.

This study attempts to give an outline of the role of women of Srinagar in the Handicraft Industry of Kashmir. It is an exploratory study based on empirical data collected from field survey. The Handicraft Industry of Kashmir is largely a home-based industry in which women's contributions are significant. This study to begin with gives an introduction of the Women's

Studies and women at work in general. Numerous studies pertaining to role of women in various economic sectors in general and home-based industry in particular have been summarized in this introductory part.

Secondly, the chapter on methodology stipulates the aims and objectives of the study. It also gives a statement of the problem. Different crafts in which women are involved have also been briefly explained. Various aspects of the research design pertaining to selection of universe and sample, data collection procedure, tools adopted, analysis of data etc. have also been explained in detail in this chapter.

In the third chapter the quantitative analysis of the data is presented under three different sections namely; Socio-demographic and educational characteristics of the respondents, Artisan Women: Work and Family and their Perceptions and Aspirations. Some important case studies of artisan women have also been included in this chapter. A brief about the working pattern of the handicraft industry based on the interviews of middlemen and dealers has been appended to this chapter as well.

Lastly, a concluding chapter giving an outline of the entire study has been worked out. It also incorporates the significance of this study. Some suggestions have also been given in this chapter.

While preparing this study I received help and encouragement from various quarters and it is my pleasant duty to register my thanks to them all:

Dr. Rashida Rana Siddiqi, Reader Dept. of Sociology, the supervisor of this thesis have been a source of guidance and help. Despite her busy schedule she has kindly spared time to go through the entire typescript and suggest numerous amendments and

changes in its presentation. She has been instrumental in arriving at the formulations outlined in this thesis. I am deeply beholden to her for her kind encouragement and guidance.

Prof. Noor Mohd., Chairman Dept. of Sociology has encouraged and guided me throughout my long years at Aligarh. Prof. Shad Bano has also been encouraging and kind to me. Other teachers in the Dept. of Sociology have also helped me in various ways. Dr. Sana-ullah Parwaz, Reader Dept. of Philosophy has been a friend, philosopher and guide throughout my academic struggle at Aligarh. I am thankful to them all.

Prof. Mohd. Ishaq Khan, Director Audio-Visual Research Centre and Prof. Bashir A. Dabla, Head Dept. of Sociology, University of Kashmir have been kind and encouraging. Mr. Farooq A. Lone (Producer), Mr. Tariq Abdullah and Aijazul Haq at AudioVisual Research Centre, University of Kashmir have given me their unfailing cooperation. Dr. Aneesa Shafi, Lecturer, Dept. of Sociology and Tareek A. Rather, lecturer Centre for Central Asian Studies, university of Kashmir, have been loving and helpful all along. My friend Ms. Rana Hashmy, System Analyst University of Kashmir, has provided crucial and critical help in the analysis of the data of this thesis. The State Directorate of Handicrafts, J&K State, especially Mr. Nazir Ahmad, Editor - cum - Publishing officer provided me photographs and materiel regarding different crafts of Kashmir. Mr. Minhaj, Research Scholar, Dept. of Geography, AMU, Aligarh, kindly cartographed the map of Srinagar city I register my gratitude to all of them.

My Parents and Parents-in-Law have been very kind and encouraging throughout my academic career. Other family members have been helping and cooperative. But for the kind

cooperation and loving encouragement of my in-laws I just could not have carried out the present study. It is my pleasure to record my thanks to them all. My brother Mr. Mehmood Ahmad deserves a special mention for his constant encouragement, guidance and love.

Shahid Rasool has joyously stood by me through thick and thin while working out the contents of this study. Apart from being an unfailing source of love and inspiration, his critical comments have subtly directed the formulations outlined in this thesis. Imad, a thing of beauty and joy for ever has been experiencing the pangs of separation for a considerable period of time. I feel for both of them from the deeps of my heart.

Zeba, Shahid Parwez and Najeeba have given me constant and continuous cooperation during my stay at Aligarh. Khurshid-ul-Islam, accompanied me to various localities of Srinagar. His help and cooperation made the task of data collection easier. The artisan women of Srinagar who were the respondents of this research and the various middlemen and dealers connected with the trade of handicrafts responded to my queries with courtesy and cooperation. All of them deserve my sincere gratitude.

Shabbir Ahmad (Rahbar Computer Centre) deserves my thanks for typing out various portions of this thesis and giving it the final shape.

Allah alone is besought for help and on Him alone we depend.

Salima Jan

Introduction

I

The criteria, norms, values and standards of evaluation of ancient human civilizations were theological, ideological and philosophical. Religions, ideologies and philosophies provided the conceptual framework within which social, economic and political roles were defined and assigned. The prestige, authority and power emanated from definitions, aspirations and prescriptions stipulated within that framework. All the actors in the social drama; the King, the minister, the administrator, the worker, the father, the mother, the son, the daughter, the brother, the sister etc. all had to or were expected to perform their roles as outlined in the script dictated by particular dominant ideology in a given social context. The relationships, duties, responsibilities, and accountabilities emanated from the ruling ideology at various periods of human historical evaluation. The world-views consciously as well as unconsciously were translated into corresponding value systems.

Human history went through a radical transformation in the modern era. This transformation was brought about by scientific research, technological sophistication and industrial revolution witnessed during the modern era of human history. The classical values and norms were

redefined and reformulated in the light of increasing secularization dictated by the increasing demands of scientific, technological and industrial culture. The process of secularization was accompanied by an ethic of rising individualism. The emphasis now shifted on individual's achievements and aspirations, interests and expectations and joys and pleasures. The rising democratic revolution throughout the globe celebrated individual's rights and concerns. In the process, a new age of common man was inaugurated. Socialism too was an uprising by dispossessed people against huge monopolies consequent upon the on going & increasing process of industrialization. With the onset of 20th. Century a general anti-establishmentarian climate was created and sustained by multiple factors. The first half of the 20th. Century was characterized by socialist movements and anti-colonial struggles throughout Asia and Africa. The end of World War II signaled the establishment of various socialist states following the 1917 socialist model of the then Soviet Union and emergence of numerous free republics as a result of the successful anti-colonial struggles carried out by hundreds of millions of people in Asia & Africa.

While people of Asia & Africa in general were involved in anti-colonial struggles, women in Europe and America were engaged in struggle for gender equality,

gender justice and gender liberty. They launched agitation for their social, political, economic, educational and cultural rights. The women's liberation movement picked up momentum in the beginning of the 2nd. half of the 20th. Century.

Women's Studies is an outcome of a long struggle to raise the status of women and give them their just rights. The social movement for women's upliftment and women's awakening highlighted the pathetic condition of this segment of society and pointed out that women have been living in distress and subject to exploitation under male domination through ages. It is, thus, the need of the time to change their condition and improve their position

The women's movement popularly known as "Feminist Movement" started in the West. Consequently, Women's Studies was initiated in the United States of America. In fact, Women's Studies in the United States was influenced by civil rights and human rights movements. This is the reason that in the West, Women's Studies is considered as a movement-born programme¹.

The women's movement created awareness among women of their subordination and subjugation as well as their potentialities, abilities and rights. It brought about a revolution in women's perceptions and perspectives. Women have developed a set of attitudes that are

described as modernist, forward looking and progressive. Men, too, have started modifying their age-long stereotyped thinking towards women and there has been a perceptible change for the better in women's self esteem and social status. Feminist activism led to greater political awareness, social upliftment, economic independence and cultural illumination of women and they became more self-conscious, self-assured and self-confident. In course of time, women's problems became the cynosure of sociological research where social, political and economic questions pertaining to women per se are subjected to theoretical and empirical inquiry through interdisciplinary feedback.

Women's Studies in the Asian region was initiated gradually and got momentum by undertaking micro and analytical studies relating to women's issues. In India, the pre-independence period marked the beginning of awareness of the suffering of women due to oppressive social customs. These oppressive social customs were *Sati*, the ill-treatment of widows, the ban on widow marriage, polygyny, child marriage, denial of property rights and education to women. All these attracted the attention of the late 19th century social reformers. Social reformers thought that by giving women access to education and by enacting progressive legislation these

social evils can be eradicated and people can become sensitive to the injustice perpetrated on women. In short, during the phase prior to Independence an awareness of the need to remove social disabilities of women was created. In Independent India, the Constitution that was adopted guaranteed equality for all. Women's Studies in India, however, acquired a new edge, objective and sensitivity from mid-sixties, when it was realised that the formal rights granted in the Constitution and subsequent policies formulated presumably to implement them were being distorted.²

The International Women's Decade worked as a catalyst to highlight and stimulate all aspects of women's issues and Indian women also became a part of the worldwide awakening. The reviewers of status report on women in India presented a large body of data on different aspects of women's lives, and identified unexpected trends in women's situation such as declining sex ratio; declining economic participation rate and growing gap in life expectancy and mortality rates between men and women.

The leitmotif of Women's Studies is social transformation by which we can change life-styles, life-chances and ultimately the "situation of women".³ It provides us knowledge about women's actual position in society and the way they struggle against hostile forces in

hostile situations for survival. It exposes the reality that women are unable to lead a dignified life in the present world. Women do not get adequate opportunity to develop their personality and utilize their potentialities to the full. This is assumed to be due to the discrimination and oppression of women. Thus, the motivating force behind Women's Studies is to improve the condition and promote the interest of women who are the "oppressed" and "exploited".

Women's Studies is defined as "the study of women with a women's perspective".⁴ It is generally assumed that the situation in which women live, the problems which they grapple with, and the way they are treated can better be understood by women themselves. The studies and the literature about women that are available and authored by males do not project the correct and real image of women and their situation. They, by and large, express biased views about women as they want to maintain their domination on this weaker segment of society. It is in consonance with the general principle of methods of social sciences that a person can better understand and analyze the problem if he himself experiences it and is involved in the concrete situation. In this perspective it is appropriate to explain Women's Studies as understanding of women in the world from

women's point of view. In scientific tradition Women's Studies may be defined as the study of situations of women with a view of improving their lot and developing their potentialities so that they may make effective contribution to social set-up and national life. It aims at transforming the situation in order to enable them to achieve honourable position and to perform determinant role in society.

Though the broad basis of Women's Studies is feminism, yet its scope is wide as it includes humanistic trends and outlook towards women and expands its horizon. It is generally assumed that feminism as well as Women's Studies are the projection of women's will to dominate men. Some males make such sarcastic remarks that women want to be men, but the fact is that feminism is concerned with humanistic values and incorporates the traits of humanism in its concept and perspective. It does not propagate the domination of women on men. In fact, it rejects the domination of males on females. Its main concern is "to restore to half of humanity its rightful place in human society", as well as "to restore the women their humanity".⁵ It preaches equality and believes that women get equal opportunities and equal rights and privileges in order to lead honourable life in the male dominated world. It is possible only when they will be free from

subjugation, subordination and domination of males. This is the reason that feminism is considered as a movement to liberate women from male subjugation. Thus, the liberation of women and the way it could be achieved come under the scope of Women's Studies. These matters form the core of perspective which Women's Studies wants to develop, adopt and apply to understand and study women and their place in society. Maithreyi Krishna Raj describes it as "to become aware of the situation of women, of the relation of women to the world, of the oppression and discrimination to which women have been subjected and to use this as a power to change the situation".⁶ She treats Women's Studies as "interdisciplinary" or "multidisciplinary" and finds that "the unity of study is women and her life".⁷

The significant point here is that how can one explain the situation of women because it will determine the nature of women's studies. Maithreyi Krishma Raj conceptualizes the situation of women in terms of three important concepts: "Status", "Power" and "Autonomy".

SITUATION OF WOMEN

STATUS POWER AUTONOMY

Status occupies pivotal place in sociological tradition. Sociologists largely use the term in order to

explain social structure. The classical definition of status is given by Ralf Linton⁸ who associates it with another concept, “role”.

He says:

“A structure as distinct from the individual who occupy it, is simply a collection of rights and duties...a role represents the dynamic aspect of status... when (an individual) puts his rights and duties which constitutes the status into effect, he is performing a role ... role and status are quite inseparable”.

Status simply signifies the position which an individual occupies in society and as such has certain rights and obligations and enjoys certain privileges that give him particular respect and honour. It has both subjective and objective component. In modern times, there are certain determinants of status which are generally known as indicators of status. A status is generally evaluated in terms of income, property, opportunities, education, and training in skills that open up chances of employment, health levels, rights and privileges. These factors determine life-style of an individual in society. Women when studied from the point of view of these indicators it is revealed that they have

lower income, lower employment, lower education, lower health and apart from these there are certain customs and practices that hamper their development, oppress and damage the physical and psychological well-being of women.

“Power” is an effective instrument to raise the status of a person. It gives more rights and privileges to enforce one’s will. One of the reasons of women’s subordination is that they are powerless. Consequently, they can neither resist nor enforce their own will against injustices and inequalities. The obvious result is that others exercise power over them and keep them under their control and subjugation. The exponents and champions of feminism and Women Studies express their concern to know how people get power and what makes them powerful. They also show interest to find out the instrument and the institution that provide power to them and make them more and more potential. Sometime, they cross all limits and break all rules of justice and equality in exercise of power. They exploit women for their own interests. Women’s Studies tries to analyze how power is exercised, and how it becomes injurious to the life of women, how it can be restricted and checked to reasonable limits. In this attempt, Women’s studies also finds out strategies to eliminate the sources of power and limit them to the

extent that it may not cause injury to women. Some of the feminists are interested to initiate struggle to achieve power because it is the means to liberate women from male subordination.

“Autonomy” is a concept, which indicates that ability of man which enables him to exercise his will and accordingly perform activities to achieve desired goals and ends. In this respect, it is considered as a form of power. Maithreyi Krishna Raj explains it as hereunder:

“The opportunity to act independently on one’s own behalf and not at the behest or order of someone has the basic premise that every human individual has the right to decide her/his destiny so long as such a right does not abbreviate or abrogate the people’s right”.⁹

Autonomy is associated with the concept of liberty which is considered essential in modern age for the overall development and wellbeing of individual. It is necessary that individuals should have right to operate in the world according to their own will, perception and opinion to materialise their ambitions and desires, when we study women we find that they have less power, autonomy and liberty in society. The high degree of restrictions and taboos are imposed on them and thus, they have fewer

roles in decision-making process. The study of women in social setup and their interaction with the male world compel us to think how much power and how much autonomy women and men should have in society. At the same time, one has also to think how much and to what extent power and autonomy of people be limited in order to maintain the balance as well as the harmony between men and women. These issues are no doubt problematic and require thorough and scientific investigation. However, the studies conducted by feminists exposed that women lack autonomy and further located the areas and spheres where they have less or no autonomy at all. They are: choice in marriage, marriage dissolution, choice of career, choice of education, lifestyle and expression of sexuality etc.¹⁰

Sociology of Women

The discipline of Sociology was developed in Europe in the first half of the 19th century. After the Industrial and French Revolutions, social thinkers began to think afresh in positivistic terms about the problems faced by the people. The invention of machines and the development of technology increased the comfort of the life. However, it was felt that the social life was still in traditionally structured and unable to cope with the new

situations created by science and technology. The social thinkers thought over the issue seriously and tried to develop a science of society which could study it from holistic point of view and positivistic method. The persistent efforts of social thinkers brought fruits and Comte prepared a blueprint of that science by the name of Sociology.

The main purpose of Sociology was to study society scientifically, to have correct, fruitful and utilitarian knowledge about social issues so that they may be utilized in construction and reconstruction of society. The motivating force was an overall transformation of the social setup to make it more and more beneficial to humanity.

Sociology studies human interactions and human relations. It also studies the forces that affect them and the way they are shaped and molded. But concepts and theories of Sociology could not embody the ethos of women who constitute the half of the human race and are equally significant and important. The structure of relationship and the process of interaction explained and elaborated by Sociologists with a biased view as they failed to point out how male dominated social set up develops such patterns of interactions and relationships where women are subjugated and denied their rights. In

the modern times, in the wake of humanism and feminism, it is necessary to develop such body of knowledge which could take cognizance of these issues and develop such perspectives through which overall position of women could be improved.

Sociology of women is mainly concerned, with the transformations related with women and the ways through which they can be achieved. It explains the position of women in society and points how oppressed, subjugated and subordinated, they are due to constant and consistent efforts of males to use them and utilize their services for the interests and benefit of males. It creates such conditions, which can help to remodel and restructure the entire social setup imbibing the humanitarian values of equality, liberty and fraternity as well as human rights and justice to improve the position of women.

Sociologists have always been concerned with women's problems and issues. They have not been the first to study women's issues, but most of the researches on women, have also been done by Sociologists.¹¹ In course of time, women studies became popular in India and some women sociologist came forward and expressed their concern with women's issues. They emphasized the need and importance of Women's Studies in modern India and

further determined the areas where researches should be conducted.

II

WOMEN AT WORK

Examining the relationship of women to economy is central to women's studies. Economy is a very important aspect of our life. It determines a person's position in society and is believed to give him / her power and dominance. Women's contribution to economy needs to be separately dealt with in view of the fact that a great deal of women's work remains invisible. From time immemorial women have played a substantial role in the economic sector of society. However, their contribution has always been designated as non-productive. The exact contribution of women to economy is only partially and erratically documented. Secondly, as the social and cultural perceptions of men and women differ, women need to be specially and specifically studied in terms of their contribution to economy and participation in total work force. Women's responsibilities are different and they encounter different types of cultural taboos. Furthermore, their child-bearing role places them in a

different and difficult situation. Thirdly, a coherent explanation is needed as to why historically women have played a subordinate role. Finally, in view of the fact that women face specific problems and issues in the working life, they, therefore, need special focus, attention and analysis.

There is a widespread belief that women in India have been economically dependent on their male relations from times immemorial. The society has perceived women to be confined to house-keeping, making no considerable economic contributions for the management and up-keep of family life. It is being argued that the modernization process has improved their employment position by providing them educational opportunities and granting them certain basic rights. However, this description of women's contribution to human society and economy is a highly misleading assessment of the historical role of women. The modernization process has inducted a considerable number of women belonging to upper and middle classes of society into the salaried class. However, the overwhelming majority of our rural women have historically played a significant role in the development of economy and society. For centuries they have been performing multiple and major economic roles both within and outside the family. These women have always worked

larger hours than men have, but their work has always remained hidden and has never been recognised nor have they been paid at par with their male counterparts.

However, the scenario has now changed considerably if not drastically. For the last so many years women's role in social production has been the focus of intensive research and analysis. Social scientists and activists all over the globe are carrying thorough research and increasingly making public in general and women in particular aware about the contribution women make to economy. The process started with the declaration of women's Decade (1975-1985). It was an official recognition to the significance of analyzing multiple aspects of the role of women in productive and reproductive activities. Consequently, a vast body of theoretical and empirical studies has appeared on women's socioeconomic contributions.

In India, it was only after the report of the committee on the status of women that considerable attention was paid to women's role in economic production. The available literature and data especially census reports purports to bring out two features of women's participation rate:

“ The lower level of participation rate of women, vis-a-vis that of men, the declining trend in women's participation rate over time¹².

Table I gives an overview of the worker's population ratios in India. The lower work participation rate of women as documented by decennial census reports in this century are highly misleading and suffer from serious confusion. The women's work participation rate has been indicated to range between one fourth to one half of the male participation rate. The most misleading feature of all these census reports has been systematic exclusion of domestic work from economic activity in all census enumeration. There is a growing recognition that typical activities carried out by women are systematically excluded from labour force and national income statistics. It is difficult to accept these rates as shown in the census reports for women in an economy which is predominantly agricultural and where the incidence of poverty is still significant (around 36 to 37 %)¹³. Women's work tends to be disregarded in overall perception of the society and this bias informs the statistical data collected on women's activities.

Work has been so classified and defined even in post independence India that the very classifications and definitions weigh against women, e.g. the work force

TABLE-I

India: Worker Population Ratios by Sex and Rural-Urban Residence, 1951 to 1993-94

Year/Source/ (NSS Round)	India			Rural India			Urban India		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1951 Census	39.1	53.9	23.4	39.5	53.5	25.0	37.1	56.4	14.7
1955 NSS(9)	-	-	-	43.2	59.2	26.6	32.4	51.4	11.6
1961 Census	43.0	57.1	28.0	45.1	58.2	31.4	33.5	52.4	11.1
1971 Census	34.0	52.7	13.9	36.1	53.6	15.5	29.6	48.9	7.1
1972-73 NSS(27)	41.3	53.5	28.2	43.5	54.5	31.8	33.1	50.1	13.4
1977-78 NSS(32)	42.2	54.2	29.3	44.4	55.2	33.1	34.4	50.8	15.6
1981 Census*	36.8	52.6	19.8	38.9	53.8	23.2	30.0	49.1	8.3
1982 NSS(38)	42.2	53.8	29.6	44.6	54.7	34.0	34.3	51.2	15.1
1987-88 NSS(43)	41.1	53.1	28.1	43.4	53.9	32.3	33.9	50.6	15.2
1989-90 NSS(45)	41.2	53.9	27.6	43.7	54.8	31.9	33.9	51.2	14.6
1990-91 NSS(46)	40.4	54.3	25.4	42.7	55.3	29.2	33.8	51.3	14.3
1991 Census**	37.5	51.6	22.3	40.0	52.5	26.7	30.2	48.9	9.2
1992 NSS(48)	41.2	54.3	27.0	43.8	55.6	31.3	33.6	50.7	14.6
1993-94 NSS(50)	42.0	54.5	28.6	44.4	55.3	32.8	34.7	52.0	15.4

* Excludes Assam

** Excludes Jammu & Kashmir

Sources : Censuses of Population, NSSO Rounds, Government of India

participation rate (WFPR), for women declined from 27.9% to 12.7% between the two census operations in India i.e. 1961-1971. However, such a drastic variation seems to be somewhat improbable and untenable. In view of the same, some analysts have attributed the wide variation to vital 'recording' of the 1971 census which stipulated "type of main activity that the person returns himself as engaged in mostly". This emphasis on main activity artificially accentuated women's under representation as workers in view of the fact that Indian societal norms predict a woman to return herself in the primary role of housewife.¹⁴

In 1961 an adult woman was considered to be a worker if apart from household work she looked after the cattle or prepared cow-dung-cakes or sold firewood or collected grass from fields etc. However, by 1971 the stress had shifted to "a person primarily engaged in some economic activity, but at the same time does also attend to some household chores."¹⁵ The relevant census column in 1961 asked for the housework plus many specified additional activities whereas 1971 relevant census column asked for economic activity plus housework. Now, this shift in emphasis is of vital importance. It signified that in 1971, the emphasis was on the visible economic activity. Thus, in 1971 census planners stipulated a more rigid

definition of a worker. Therefore, while in 1961 millions of women returned themselves as engaged in some kind of economically productive activity, the same women returned themselves as housewives in 1971. Thus an unrealistic conceptualizations or definition of work can give a distorted or unrepresented picture of women's participation rate¹⁶.

To capture women's work in a comprehensive way the census authorities in 1990's census introduced some major changes as here under:

a) A longer reference period has been used to capture women's seasonal and intermittent work in agriculture and informal sectors.

b) In order to identify the status of women in the labour market correctly, the term 'seeking work' has been replaced by 'availability for work if it is available'.

c) In order to reflect the earning capacity of the self employed, a distinction has been made between recipients of incomes and unpaid family workers.

d) A gender wise break up of data on 'head of the household' has been included for tabulation.

e) The clause 'including unpaid work on form or family enterprise' has been inserted in parentheses to the question, "did you work any time at all in the last year?"

in the Individual Slip that classifies the population into workers and non workers.¹⁷

Furthermore, census enumerators were specially trained to ask probing questions to get correct information about women's work. A list of home-based activities was made available to investigators with a view to facilitate their work. They were further asked to find out whether those women who reported as not working actually looked for work or were available for work during the reference period. The results of 1991 census were carefully evaluated by scholars. However, the conclusion that emerged was that "the efforts made for improving the statistics on female workers can not be rated as successful. Though some regions and pockets showed an increase in the work force participation rates of women, the micro-data could not show a significant increase".¹⁸ Thus, it may be said that 1991 census also failed to give a correct evaluation of women's work in India.

There are methodological, operational and definitional problems regarding women's activities. For example, at the methodological level, the time reference period used in surveys tend to exclude seasonal fluctuations or intermittent employment. At the operational level, mostly census takers interview male respondents, thus leading to an underestimation of

women's contribution. At the definitional level, the economic activities are so defined as to keep away the invisible and gender-specific activities performed by women. There are many imponderables and intangibles in all estimations and evaluations of what constitutes 'work'. In any such evacuation, the personal prejudices and predilections do play a vital role. The definition of work will be crystallized in keeping with the perceptions of decision-makers, planners and statisticians. More often than not the lack of information or communication gap can lead to exclusion of vital activities from the purview of the definition of 'work'

✓ The most disastrous and ridiculous distortion is the use of the words "Working" women and "non-working" women in current usage. Neera Desai observes, "It is as inappropriate as the terms vegetarian and non-vegetarian to distinguish between meat-eaters and non-meat eaters because everyone eats vegetarian products with or without meat. Men and women both work. The difference lies in the kind of works they do, where it is done; how it is done; for what kind of rewards and so on. If by 'work' we imply broadly 'economic activity' then women have always worked. It cannot but be otherwise. The material requirements for survival demand every one's co-operation. According to Anthropologists, women were the

major producers of food, clothing, crafts and many different tools through most of the human history. In fact, this continues to be so in all those societies of the world where production is mainly for subsistence and not for sale¹⁹.

Actually, various technological, economic and political developments have conspired into discrimination against women. The growing technological and scientific progress is introducing change at both micro economic and macro economic levels. This changes the division of labour within nation states as well as households.

In most of the countries women face unacceptable hurdles which are specifically related to their status as workers. The problems that women face are multidimensional. However, the central problems faced by women workers are unequal access to employment, education and training, and unequal pay. In addition to it, women have hardly any representation in planning and policy institutions or in international, national and local bodies where crucial decisions about work and life are arrived at.

The political, legal and social status of women has undergone a qualitative change in view of the increasing number of women working outside the household. The large-scale participation of women in paid employment is

a striking feature of contemporary social structure. At the same time, almost 90% of the female labour force is in the unorganised sector, outside the purview of the most of the labour laws. Thus massive contribution of women to economy and society and almost systematic non - recognition of these contributions needs to be analyzed and understood within the ideological/ cultural framework which assigns the role of bread-winner to man. Historically, women have carried out basic functions in subsistence economy, and now, in this technological age when mostly people work in surplus and export oriented economies wherein women have somewhat lost in the technological race, they still contribute massively to overall growth of economy, however, their role is not being sufficiently and meaningfully appreciated till date.

In this connection, some of the important studies on women's role to various economic sectors may be reviewed as hereunder. The studies indicate that though women have been on the fore-front of economic struggle and have massively contributed to agricultural, industrial and technological progress, yet their role has remained largely unrecognised. Consequently, the social status of women has not improved and although the percentage of working women has increased in some areas, yet women's share in contemporary economy is unacceptably low. In

the modern or contemporary occupation, where the percentage of the women workers has increased, some studies try to investigate the impact of these occupations on the social status of women.

Elise Boulding ²⁰ in her book ‘ Women in the twentieth century’, develops a critic both of scholarship and of the activism with regard to women and also points to possible future directions. She points out that social scientists have obfuscated the dynamics of social change in industrial society by failing to note the women sector. According to her women somehow slipped by the scholar’s eyes when developmental models were being constructed. In view of the fact that the scholars missed the women’s sector, the planners could not see her place, role and relevance in the overall context of strategies, suggestions and policy formulations. If many problems pertaining to women have arisen due to lack of resources, many more problems have also been accentuated due to an incomplete development of world perspective on the part of scholars, planners and activists.

The book is comprised of three sections or parts. The first part gives a descriptive view of women. It provides the world profile as reflected in United Nations data. It also provides a comparative view of human experience of women as nomads and settlers to set straight some of our

misconceptions about the role of urbanism in social development. A historical overview of women's work roles has also been given in this part.

The second part spotlights on the women as producers, primarily in the third world. It tries to conceptualize the meaning of economic productivity and also underlines the role of women in that productivity. This section gives an overview of the important role of women as producers in each part of the world as well. The role of women in the complex process of production, distribution and consumption is also highlighted in this section. This section is most directly addressed to planners and policy makers.

The third part of the book brings out the role of women as actors on world scene. It gives a critical amount of the strengths and weaknesses of women's organisations and women's perspectives. It exhorts women to learn to think in global or trans-national terms.

Srivastava²¹ in her study tries to investigate the factors that compel married women to enter the labour market and also to find out how the employment of such women changes their behaviour and life-styles. With a view to bring it out a sample of educated working women from three different prestige levels has been selected by her. The findings of the study indicate that family

situation and the age of the children usually have little impact on women's decision to join paid jobs or withdraw from them. Most women enter employment market before their marriage and majorities of them continue their employment even after marriage and child bearing. The study finds that occupational prestige of husband is the main consideration in the choice of a wife's job. At all prestige levels wives work in occupations, which are consistent, are only slightly less prestigious than that of their husband's occupation. A wife was never found working in occupation which was much lower in rank to the occupation of her husband. A good majority of husbands and wives work in same kind of occupation.

The study finds that employment does lead to a change on various aspects of behaviour and life-styles of women. By comparing working and non-working women at different socio-economic levels, the study finds that the fertility behaviour undergoes a change when women engage in gainful employment outside the household. A working woman have less children than non-working women. The influence of employment is also felt on the family composition and the way domestic responsibilities are shared in the household. In most of the cases working women have to keep mother-in-law or some other relatives or employ some domestic help to take care of their home

and children. In the families of working women husband and wife develop greater cooperation and share domestic responsibilities. Working women are more liberal than non-working women, working women have wider social interaction and get the opportunity to make their own colleagues, while as most of the leisure time activities of the non-working women are confined within their immediate neighbourhood. Working women join professional organisations or social welfare organisations whereas non-working women are mostly members of recreational clubs. Working women compared to non-working women feel that women should have equal rights in matters of marriage and property. They are more modernistic and enjoy a high standard of living in comparison to non-working women.

Asok Mitra²² examines on the basis of 1961 census alone how female participation in the major groups of household and non-household industry in the rural and urban areas in India as a whole and in respect of each of its five political zones fared in comparison to male participation in each case. The study concludes that the mean participation sex ratio is quite low. In rural household industry it is not so unsatisfactory as in urban household industry. But in non-household industry, both in rural and urban areas, the mean sex ratios are

alarmingly low. Secondly, the zonal distribution of mean sex ratio show that the whole of northern India in comparison to Southern and Western parts of India employs very low proportion of women. Thirdly, the study compares the position of rural and urban women and finds out that in urban areas women's place was third and fourth in educational and medical services respectively, whereas in rural areas it was at the twenty fifth and tenth. Conversely, in rural areas, far more women were employed in water supply, sanitary services and plantation crops. Fourthly, the study finds that more females are engaged in household economic activities than in non-household activities. Female participation in household industry such as textiles, tobacco products and forestry which are characterized by high labour intensity and less skill is far more than in other economically significant sectors.

Lalita Devi²³ in her study, which was conducted in Trivandrum City, attempts to examine the impact of female employment on her status within the family, office and society. The findings of the study indicate that employment has decidedly enhanced the status of women in the family. The employed women enjoy greater social and familial status than their unemployed counterparts. The study tries to examine the status of women viz; their participation in the decision-making processes, extent of

freedom in speaking etc. Respondents of the study accepted that they found their male members in the office quite co-operative. All of them were highly satisfied with their jobs. Employment helped them to realise their potential and gave them necessary confidence and assurance. It also gave them a chance to prove their worth in a male dominated society. Besides, employed women had developed a new set of attitudes in line with modern trends. Whereas unemployed women were more rooted in traditional mores and customs. Thus, the study concludes that employment plays an instrumental role in raising the status of women in the family, in the office and in the society.

Karlekar²⁴ in her study tries to present a socio-economic profile of married working women from an under-developed community in an urban context. The sample consists of 80 sweeper women of Delhi. The study points out that employment of underprivileged women is unavoidable for maintaining the social and economic order. The contribution of women to family income is substantial and their children, husbands and other relatives also depend on them in various ways. They are engaged in major household jobs such as cooking, cleaning and child-care. The study finds that the women did not have any major role in decision-making. Only relative minor

decisions are taken by women folk. The study further finds that males are increasingly giving up scavenging jobs and females had very few chances of leaving their caste occupation. These women were hopeless about the future of their daughters as far more boys were registered in schools in comparison to girls in Balmiki community and women feared that their daughters might have to take similar assignments when they grow up.

Gulati ²⁵ in her study shows that women who work in the unorganised sector come from households where the parents are in casual wage labour and tend to get married to men who too are in this sector. once married to men who don't have regular jobs, the irregularities itself introduces a certain amount of instability in their marital relationships, very often forcing on women more responsibilities than they can shoulder. This in turn makes it even more difficult for them to help their children, particularly daughters to do any better. All their aspirations and efforts are built around getting their sons out of the insecure existence hoping that they will do better.)

Rarnanama ana Bambawale²⁶ have tried to compare the work conditions of women in large scale, medium size and small scale industries in the cities of Bombay and Pune. The study points out that women workers have

sound welfare benefits such as maternity leave of three months and crèches attached to factory in the large scale industry. The women do not have an independent representation in the factory, but are members of the trade unions dominated by male workers. The unions generally are not interested in problems faced by women workers. Furthermore, women workers generally do not have any decision - making power regarding their salaries. The respondents interviewed in the case study indicated that an overwhelming majority of women functioned at lower and junior levels. Most of them were employed as workers on production and had little chance of any promotion whatsoever. Only a few could achieve decision - making Executive Cadre. It was also found that male subordinates do not approve of their authority and created various - types of hurdles with a view to disturb the smooth functioning of the organization. Additionally, women are subjected to considerable sexual harassment and as most of the workers usually belong to lower class and less educated family background, they accept as well as expect such treatment as a part of their professional lives. A comparison of the female workers in Pune and Bombay in all the three types of factories reveals that women get better emoluments and perks in Bombay. They are well unionised and are in executive positions in the unions. In

the medium size factories women are getting minimum wages, bonus and other perks. However, there are no crèche facilities nor any subsidised transport. The greatest exploitation of women takes place in small-scale factories. Women even do not get minimum wages. Women are given employment in these factories because they cannot organise and lack strong unionising instincts. Small-scale factories have no facilities for women. They have no permanent service, no leave entitlement and no bonus. They are often employed on daily wage basis.

Cauvery and Sudha Nayak²⁷ presented a study about female labour force participation in Tamil Nadu. The paper contends that female workers participation has increased from 12% in 1971 to 14% in 1981. Over these periods of time female workers have considerably shifted from the primary sector to secondary and tertiary sectors. The study maintains that during 1984-85 the state of Tamil Nadu employed about 401700 women. Out of total labour force the female labour participation in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors worked out to 34.1%, 13.5% and 21.5% respectively. Between 1975-1985 an additional increase of 72.9 % has been registered in female labour employment, Similarly in the organised sector, according to the study, the participation of women between 1975-1985 has improved from 15% to 19.6%.

Sundaram²⁸ based his study on an analysis of regional variations in work force participation of women across 14 states of India. The participation rates are based on the findings of the NSS 32nd Round Employment - Unemployment survey carried out through India.

The findings of the study indicate that women's participation in remunerative economic activities is adversely affected by higher fertility rates and consequent child-bearing and child-rearing engagements. It so happens both in rural and urban areas. The women were running the household engaged in a host of activities which fall outside the conventionally defined boundary of economic activity. Thus, apart from too young or too old females a high percentage of women who do not figure on the Usual Status Main Activity Criterion, are simply engaged in so called "domestic Duties". Therefore, the study hypothesizes that large burdens of child-bearing and rearing and other domestic activities must be the main factors responsible for lower Work Force Participation Rates of Women on the Main Activity Criterion. Subsequently in the context of inter-state variations in WFPRS, this would mean that states having higher GFR (general fertility rate) must be having low work force participation rates of women on the Main Activity Criterion.

Gote-Garhane²⁹ in her study on construction workers tries to examine whether these lower class women are getting any benefit of democracy or modernisation. The construction workers were chosen from the city of Aurangabad. 75% of the total respondents were from schedule castes, 6% belonging to schedule tribes, 79% of the respondents were from rural origin and 97 % of them were totally illiterates. 92 % of the respondents were married below the age of 16 years.

The study found that these construction workers usually worked 8 to 9 hours daily at the site, their daily wages being Rs. 9. These female construction workers belonged to the socially and economically backward castes. They were totally unaware of their political, social and economic rights. They could not find time for religious and recreational activities. All of them lived in sub-human conditions.

The above observations indicate as the study points out that despite constitutional guarantees and legislative measures for granting social justice to women, they still continue to be exploited and their conditions have not changed even after four decades of independence.

Nayyar³⁰ in her study on women rural workers in Haryana and Punjab finds that majority of women work in agriculture, out of which the proportion of marginal

workers is very high. The number of marginal workers is 87 % and 43 % in Punjab and Haryana respectively. However, the number of casual workers is relatively small. Nayyar argues that female workers have withdrawn from rural labour market due to increased agricultural output and incomes in both states. Secondly, increased mechanisation of the agriculture has led to further decline in the demand for female labour. The migrant labourers have also contributed to the decline in female labour. The demand for female labour increases during peak seasons. However, all women are not willing or available to work in agricultural sector. Many women prefer to work in animal husbandry, dairy, tailoring, spinning and weaving etc. Thus, there is a need for diversification of rural economy with more opportunities in the non-agricultural sector.

Ramu³¹ conducted his study in Bangalore's three major public sector industries chosen because of high concentration of women workers. The sample consisted of 245 single earner couples and 245 double earner couples. The findings of the study indicate that wife's economic status plays an instrumental role in domestic decision-making. Women having no economic status either use convert influence to determine the result of particular decision or submit to the domination of their husbands.

The success of such an exercise depends upon the individual behaviour patterns of spouses and other dynamics of their familial and marital affairs. The study finds that while comparing single earner and double earner spouse, it becomes clear that women in single earner families have lower bargaining capacity to share power and contribute to vital family decisions, whereas among double earner families women because of their economic resource have a greater authority in domestic decisions. Women in such families need not to adopt covert strategies to extract power from their husbands. The study points out that ultimately economic resources of women determine their quantum of power in relation to their husbands.

Jasani ³² in his study points out that increasing work participation does not in itself lead to empowerment in a situation where not only does the labour market favour men over women, but the division of labour within occupations is sex-biased. The study is conducted on Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) employed at the primary health centres in Maharashtra. The study points out that equal remuneration for equal or similar work even though a very important demand in the present condition, it is not sufficient for the real empowerment. Firstly, because the subordinate position of women in the

family is extended at the work place. Thus, within the same job paying the same wage, the woman is made in actuality subordinate to man. Secondly, for the same job the society looks at the man as a better qualified person than the woman, Thirdly, the bargaining power of the women at the work place is limited due to their socio-economic background and they can ill-afford to loose their job. Fourthly, in addition to all exploitative situations that any worker encounters at the job, the woman is subjected to sexual exploitation.

The study brings out that women's employment in the rural health services ANMS has given them badly needed financial support, in view of the fact, that most of them come from low socio-economic background. However, their job entails extreme vulnerability as they are at the lowest rung of the hierarchy and work outside in far-flung rural areas. Besides, the nature of their work does not lead to harmonious relationships with other women of the village, e.g. "hunting" women to get them sterlised is not a welcome assignment. Such an exercise, the study argues, diminishes the badly required community support in their professional and personal lives.

Sethi³³ seeks to analyse the work patterns of women in relation to their participation in decision-making at different levels and assess their labour time spent in

agriculture, animal husbandry and other household activities. Four agriculture districts of Himachal Pradesh - Mandi, Hamirpur, Solan and Shimla were selected for data collection for the study. 651 women cultivators are selected for the sample out of 3101 women.

The analysis of the study highlights the dominant role of women in agricultural production and in house-keeping. Women on an average put in about 151 days of work as compared to an average of 121 days put in by men at the family farms. 70% of the women compared to 52% of the men worked for more than 100 days in a year. Thus, women's contribution to agricultural work is more than that of men in Himachal Pradesh. Mostly, women are engaged in subsistence agriculture while men are occupied in commercial agriculture. The proportion of women engaged in various aspects of cattle-care is much higher than the proportion of men. 80% of cattle-care is done by women, 98.3% of women are engaged in milking cows whereas only 14.28% of the men are engaged in this activity. 96.9% of women are engaged in cleaning of the cattle-sheds whereas only 16.47% of men are engaged similarly. The women are furthermore overwhelmingly engaged in domestic chores such as fetching water or fuel, removing cow-dung to the fields, cleaning and grinding grain.

However, women's dominant participation in economic activities does not give them a dominant role in decision-making, for example, only 7 to 10 percent women can take independent decisions on education and admission of children in schools, or in selecting an occupation or mate for children, or on expenditure on children's marriage etc. Men dominate women in such domains of decision making as the purchase of agricultural implements, seeds, fertilizers and insecticides etc. Men also decide investment of family income in agricultural activities and participation in village development activities. Thus, men wield considerable domestic power by exercising control over decisions affecting household. The study concludes that the women who are the productive and the reproductive agents, exercise exclusive control over peripheral areas of domestic life.

Tandon and Kumar ³⁴ in their study carried out in Gilbert Hill slum of Bombay revealed that 63 % of the respondents were employed. Among employed women 47.62 % were domestic maid and 22.22 % were self employed. 66.67% of the employed respondents gave economic necessity as the reason for their earnings, while 33.33% were working to supplement their family income.

According to Tandon and Kumar, women play a vital role in the un-organized labour sector. Many women in the

lower socio-economic group are victims of social injustice and have no independent status. A women can hardly ever chose; she is dependent on what happens to her; and she must take meaner things because meaner things are within her reach. The condition of slum women in particular is worst than their counterparts. Their study also showed that inspite of many developmental programmes most of the socially underprivileged women are still suffering. Early marriage, having many children, illiteracy, etc. are very common among them. Majorities of the women are forced to undertake menial jobs to support their families. They have to labour for elongated hours in addition to performing their domestic duties.

Preet Rustagi³⁵ in her article ‘ women employment in the un-organised sector’ focuses on the rise of female participation in the un-organised sector due to economic compulsions. She points out that in a labour surplus economy like Indias with low economic avenues and increasing cost of living, females have been pushed into the labour market. Women are preferred in unorganised sector in view of the gender differentiation of wages. Though the rise in the employment of women due to economic compulsions have been breaking many existing cultural taboos of the Indian society, yet the patriarchal mode of thinking has not been significantly altered. This

has further worsened the conditions of Indian women. The female workers take up all the household chores along with income generating activities under stringent working conditions in the unorganised sector. There is no legislative protection of female worker's rights and no job security. This process has been accentuated in our times due to the on going economic reforms since the early 1990's. In view of the same Preet Rustagi stresses the need for labour organization of women workers.

In an essay entitled 'Analysing Women's Work Under Patriarchy' by Nirmala Benerji ³⁶ which appeared in a book 'From Myths to Markets: Essays on Gender' edited by Kumkum Sangri and Uma Chakravarti. She dissents from the most prevalent interpretations of women's secondary position and pay, which argue generally that greater employment opportunities can give women more independence. She rejects the analysis of neo-classical economists such as Gary Baker which refer to gender differences in qualification that make it rational for men to have greater work opportunities - but equally differs from explanations by Harry Braveman and Maria Mies which look to Marxist interpretations of economic structure. Mies's thesis that capitalism relies on 'housewifisation' is contradicted by her and she argues that the expansion of capitalism in East and South East

Asia has drawn women into the labour force rather than concentrating them as housewives. Banerjee derives solution from a thesis by Heidi Hartmann in regard to European developments. Hartmann argues that male control over women's participation in the work force and resulting low pay and worsened conditions for women did not come simply from the prior subordinate position of women in the family. Rather, the specific powers gained by male workers through the trade union movement, in fact, functioned against women in Europe, allowing them to use union regulations and powers to subordinate women both in the work place and home.

III

WOMEN IN HOME-BASED INDUSTRY

- AN OVERVIEW

One of the crucial methodological problems pertaining to women's household work is what has been called by leading scholars of women's studies as 'invisibility phenomenon'. As a matter of fact, women are engaged in a complex web of household activities and there are no readymade criteria on the basis of which women's household work can be conceptualized, defined,

classified, quantified and documented. Women's household work is actually comprised of a plethora of activities. These activities consume the time and energy of women, but owing to long-drawn-out ideological and societal moorings and predilections, these activities are not deemed to be productive or remunerative. Therefore, they do not figure in any governmental or non-governmental analysis and evaluation. of work, e.g. women prepare food, clean and maintain dwelling places, reproduce and rear children, maintain social relationships, cater to common friends and relatives, care for elderly people, exchange presents on festivals and ritual occasions, extend invitations and provide hospitality, fetch water and fire wood and engage in multifaceted works concerning their husbands. Women's contributions in these and similar activities is of immense significance for the very survival of social, political, economic, moral and civilizational aspects of human existence. These activities are of foundational importance. However, these foundational activities are by their very nature impervious to quantification.

In developing or under developed countries we have survival-oriented economies. The huge population in these countries literally live from hand to mouth. Millions of workers are daily-wagers, working in what has been called

unorganised sector. Most of the employed people are under employed. In these societies both men and women undergo extra-ordinary levels of suffering and torture. However, the plight of women is greater and deeper. Much of their work is not quantified and much of it is simply not quantifiable.

Their work is seasonal, intermittent and uncertain. They predominately work as unpaid workers in informal sector such as family forms or enterprises where their activities are not even properly recorded. Besides, the household and economic activities of women are too mixed to demarcate between the two at the conceptual level. It is also not easy to capture their work even at the operational level because of complex methodological problems. Their contribution to economy simply can not be captured by available methods of investigation.

Elise Boulding in her book provides an arresting amount of women's work. The following lines from the book merit deep consideration.

"The nature of familial constraints on women's role as workers in every type of human society is perhaps best captured by the triple role concept of ' breeder-feeder-producer'. From the earliest and simplest hunting and gathering folk to the most industrialised society of the twentieth century, the breeding of babies and the feeding

of humans of all ages is almost exclusively the work of the women, above and beyond other productive processes in which she is engaged. In addition, the women participates in certain producer roles, usually but always differentiated from male producer roles.

It should be clear that all three categories in the breeder-feeder-producer triad are in fact producer roles, but I am distinguishing between the first two categories, which are assigned to women only, and the third, which is divided between men and women. In the subsistence society, the producer role exists primarily to create material for domestic consumption. It is only when trading begins that sticky question about agents and measurement of production arise. Woman's productivity is normally noticed by statisticians only when she leaves the home. Man's production is more apt to be noticed whether he leaves the home or not".³⁷

In recent years, women's involvement in home based industry is a subject of wide interest. It has been realised that a wide range of productive activities done by women within their domestic spheres form an important component of the national economy. Besides their domestic chores, they engage themselves in different activities ranging from piece-rate work in the production of handicrafts, beedis and export garments within sub-

contracting system to rearing of animals and poultry at home. It is estimated that 9 out of every 10 of India's more than 317 million workers are in the informal sector where there is little or no protection for jobs and wages and working conditions are unregulated. A large proportion of them are women and children, who are often paid less than their male and adult colleagues, whether working at urban construction sites or in home-based workshops run by sub-contractors for large manufacturers.³⁸ However the problem lies in the fact that planners/ statisticians have defined women as non-workers and their economic contribution towards their families fall under the heading of housework. This has not only made women's work invisible but also exact statistics is not available on the number of women engaged in home based industry. Home based labour has certain common features: among them are very low wages, long and erratic working hours, fragmentation and atomisation of the work force and the absence of any form of worker's organization.³⁹ Social scientists have evinced keen interest towards women in home based industry and tried to focus on the invisibility phenomenon of women's work.

Maria Mies⁴⁰ in her study on the women lace makers of Narsapur has pointed out that lace making is closely connected with poverty and the pauperization of poor

peasants and artisans. The women of these classes are forced to supplement the insufficient income of their husbands by their own work. As housewives and mothers who are held responsible for the regular sustenance of the family, they get pauperized faster than the men in this process. In spite of the fact that the men earn more, the women's income is all spent on the family, whereas men can either invest some of their income or spend it on their own recreation. She further claims that it would be more correct to call the women the regular bread winners of their families and not the men, because such families can survive only as long as their women guarantee their subsistence .

Nigar Fatima Abidi ⁴¹ in her study on Muslim women weavers tries to study the problems faced by them in the home based textile industry. The study finds that women were engaged in weaving activity for 7-11 hours daily. Besides they had to attend various household chores. They had to care for the kids, husbands, other family members etc. They were also found activity occupied with animal husbandry, cooking and gardening as well. The women usually are considered assistants to their respective male members. Although women weavers performed major role in the textile industry, they had no important place in

family decision making and they could not spend money on their own.

Singh & Viltanan⁴² in their study presents a selection of 13 papers on "Women And Home Based Production." The papers were deliberated upon at the conference on Women & Household held at New Delhi in January 1985. The papers tried to find out the nature of productive or income earning works done by women in their homes. All the authors of the study conquer that home based work mostly carried out by women is a common phenomenon in developing societies and merits serious sociological investigation. Unfortunately, the home based income earning work done by women mostly remains invisible. The work is not recorded in official statistics. The payment to the female worker is irregular. Besides, women themselves have accepted the overall political, social and economic norms of the male dominated society and they themselves consider the significance of their home based work as only peripheral. Therefore, the study highlights various factors which conspire to make home based work invisible for planners as well as society in general.

The papers in first section highlight significant problems such as growing informalisation of modern sector, prohibitive cost of production, exploitative nature of private contracts, lack of employment opportunities,

low wages, erratic work schedule, disorganized workforce and the lack of protective legislation etc. The other papers in the section are case studies of home based women's work such as: beedi-rolling, garment manufacturing, fruit processing, dairying, animal husbandry and traditional handicrafts. In the second section of specific schemes and strategies aimed at improving the status of home based work and women workers have been presented. Each case description is followed by an evaluation. The study also explores ways and means of uniting home based workers and giving them greater bargaining power and making public aware of the contribution of this hidden work force.

Bhatt⁴³ in her article contends that recognizing their work at the official and accounting levels can enhance the status of the women. In case of self employed women appropriate legislative, executive and judicial measures need to be taken up with a view to save them from the prevailing exploitative contract system. The study points out that in view of the exploitation of self-employed women, SEWA (Self-employed Women's Association) emerged as the first effort by women to perceive themselves as workers. This was an integrative process as self-employed women sidelined all barriers of class and caste. The study underlines that since women are largely

responsible for the maintenance of their families, greater cash income and assets must be handled by them.

Deshpande⁴⁴ in her study reports on women in the informal sector and self employed women. The study indicates that poorest women are engaged in numerous invisible occupations in the informal sector. The study highlights the problems of informal sector viz., the work unrecognized by law, health hazards, economic exploitation etc. The study also examines the impact of developing policies and modern technology on the status of self employed women. It also forwards detailed recommendations regarding women's work.

The study conducted by Mawar⁴⁵ on the tribal women of Madhya Pradesh tries to determine the status of woman in terms of her level of income, employment, education, health, her protective ability as well as her general role in family and society. The women are responsible for all domestic chores and also engaged in activities like agriculture, forest, adhoc labour etc. The present study tries to find out the roles performed by tribal women and men in various seasons, the sharing of responsibilities and the gender bias.

The study brings out that there are vital differences between the time spent on different activities and other family members. The study finds that women spend more

time on income generating activities (6.3 hrs) and household activities (2.2 hrs). In comparison to women men spent more time on social and personal activities (3.7 hrs). Men sleep longer than women, men 9.4 hrs., and women 8.5 hrs., respectively. The study indicates that women performed multiple roles for income generation, house running and taking care of children etc. Comparatively men get far more time for leisure. The study also brings out that tribes have a gender bias in terms of the expenditure incurred on health and clothing. The study also points out that while women play a significant economic role in tribal families, they are relegated to the back corner when important decisions pertaining to families and the tribe are to be taken.

Sharma Ursula ⁴⁶ in her book on 'women's work, class and urban household' has tried to explore the nature of women's household work in a modern Indian city of Shimla and showed how it contributes to the maintenance and sometimes mobility of the household. The intent of her book has been to indicate the "enormously important and largely unrecognised input made by women in this area, work that shares the cloak of invisibility that covers so much of the work done by women". By household work she does not mean housework alone, e.g. preparing food, cleaning the dwellings and caring for children, but many

other type of activities which must be done if the household is to maintain itself and prosper, activities which do not relate immediately to the physical needs of members. What is important about household service work is that it entails the existence of a group sharing some degree of continuity and status security. The nature of household work is such that it can not be undertaken solely on one's own behalf but on behalf of a unit or household comprising of several members.

Sharma further advocates that contemporaneously household is a necessary reality, especially in the context of under-developed Afro-Asian countries and more specifically in India which accommodates teeming millions of people who are malnourished, shelterless, illiterate and devoid of any medi-care. However, the structure of household as it presently is ; the form of authority and distribution of rewards and resources etc., should not go unchanged. Such a challenge is being launched by feminists in India and it must go on despite the fact that there are few if any alternatives to a family based household in India. Therefore, Sharma does not deem it expedient for Indian women to emphasis on sexual individualism and autonomy as is being done by Western women. However, short of advocating women's total independence of the family group, women should be ready

to question their place within it and strive for a clear recognition and categorical acknowledgement of their numerous contributions to the upkeep and maintenance of the household and to the society at large.

Meithreyi Krishna Raj & Karuna Channa⁴⁷ in their edited book 'Gender and the Household Domain' bring out a series of essays by prominent scholars and researchers in Women's Studies. These essays deal with the structural and cultural dimensions of relationships as obtaining at the intra-household level in contemporary South Asia. The volume explores two crucial themes which determine the analysis of gender vis-a-vis family structure and intra-household relations and work and production. While exploring the inter-linkages between these themes it debunks the so called Asian Model of the position of women which is erroneously postulated to be undifferentiated. It also, simultaneously acknowledges that despite great diversity and differentiation, that patterns of subordination of women are similar across all cultures. For example, Usha Kanhere in her study on Differential Socialization of Boys and Girls, has brought out that notions of appropriate work for women vary between castes. Women generally are engaged in traditional occupations or in various informal activities that entail lots of hard-work as well as low returns. On

the other hand men are generally in the formal sector. The subsistence production for the sustenance of the household is undertaken by women and girls. Both the stability and mobility of the family are guaranteed by women's work. The lives of girls are restricted. Their movements are confined to the household or immediate neighbourhood. They are permitted social interaction only with females. Thus, gender roles are recreated and structure of the household reproduced. Similarly K.M.A. Aziz in his contribution pertaining to Gender Creation has brought out that seclusion and modesty are deemed to be characterizing virtues for women. Female sexuality is considered dangerous to men. They are expected to safeguard their honour and such an expectation is reinforced through limited social interaction, dress and covering of the body etc.

Leela Dube and Rajni Palriwala ⁴⁸ in their edited work 'Structure and Strategies - Women , Work and Family' have brought out certain significant facets pertaining to two themes central to the analysis of gender - family structure and intra-household relations on one hand and work and production on the other. The book embodies rich ethnographic studies from Bangladesh, India, Iran, Indonesia, Pakistan, South Korea and Thailand. The articles in the book challenge the erroneous conception of

the isolable household and of a common undifferentiated Asian model of gender relations.

Haejoanj Cho in her article delineated an account of the transformation of gender role conceptualization of Chechjo Island in Korea. Chechjo society, according to Cho passes through three phases in terms of gender retaliations. The first phase relatively egalitarian and culturally and ideologically male-dominant. The second phase is termed as neither dominant by Cho. During these two phase male and female spheres of action were well demarcated; men controlling the ritual sphere and women as economic producers controlling the mundane sphere. The third phase termed as modern phase, capitalization of economy and its integration into capitalist labour and production market undermined the profitability of women's main economic activity, that of diving. In view of the fact that men earlier formed ' sacred noble class', they has gained a lead in education which facilitated their incorporation into the capitalist market through the creation of more lucrative and less strenuous occupation and jobs.

Christina Szanton in her paper examines family strategies with regard to resource allocation and investment related to gender, in the context of rapid industrialization experienced in Thai Eastern Sea Board.

She arrives at the conclusion that the gender differentiated strategies of the resource allocation change with 'class', and she further relates them to strategies of economic survival and mobility as expressed in male and female occupation patterns, and to changes and to continuities in kinship organization, family ideology, concept of male and female responsibilities and intra-household income control.

Stella Mascarenhas-Keys in her article examines women's roles and autonomy necessitated by international migration among Catholic Goans. According to Stella international migration has been one of the major economic option for upper caste Catholic Goan males. In view of the fact that male members of this community have been migrating into skilled or white-collar employment, women too have been simultaneously withdrawing from agricultural activities. According to Stella, migration and long periods of absence of father's and husband's have resulted in the development of degree of self reliance among women. Women have control over remittances. They supervise house building and farms. They are responsible for household management and are defacto household heads.

Johanna Lessinger in her paper throws light on the implication of capitalist development and the resultant

labour market for women. She finds the processes of patriarchy and capitalism as both parallel and interacting. According to her the ideological construct of patriarchy while interacting with capitalists processes generates definite constraints on Madras women who were forced out of village life into the urban slums of Madras city and engaged themselves in petty trade. Johhana argued that even these women worked within the constraints of female honour and female seclusion. However poverty had forced these women to enter the market. While working within the ideological constraints they had no hope of upward mobility.

Jayoti Guptas in her paper also focuses on capitalist model of development as contextualizing women's oppression in India. Her study on women members of caste, the Doms, brings out how capitalist processes of development conspire to keep the women of this caste in bonded prostitution. Where the Doms try to free themselves from caste shackles and economic bondage, they found few economic options open to them. The Doms, thus, had no option but return to debt bondage-men to agricultural labour and women to prostitution.

Marty Chen in a study on the linkages between poverty, gender and work in rural Bangladesh, places women in the context of kinship and household

organisation. She brings out the economic processes leading to pauperization of the women of rural Bangladesh. Her study points the discrimination women experience in both labour and product markets. Male control of women's work without male support constitutes the central paradox faced by the poor women in rural Bangladesh. The paper further brings out that rural women of Bangladesh operate within the conceptual parameters of dependence on fathers, husbands, sons and brothers.

Soon-Young Yoon in her contribution to the volume gave an account of the change which have occurred in South Korea with regard to women's work. According to Yoon these changes have been brought about and reinforced by various factors. Some of these factors can be readily cited, vis-a-vis; economic and political policies of the government, local movements, the capitalization of the rural economy, rural-urban migration etc. However, Yoon emphasizes on historically defined cultural constructs or ideology, which have significant economic implications and are integral to the structure of women's subordination.

Yoon maintains that the ideology of the motherhood in the pre-capitalist Korea formed a significant backdrop against which the female work relationships were defined. The pre-capitalist ideology confined women in the home

and had little control over household budgets. When Korea shifted to capitalist economy, the idea of motherhood was elaborated to community leader, worker and home maker and drew women out of the house.

Hasina Hashia⁴⁹, in her paper, tries to present an analysis of the participation of Muslim women in the household industry in Kashmir valley. She also has attempted to highlight the factors responsible for their participation in the economy. She has conducted her study in 24 villages of Kashmir Valley and found that economic necessity was the major cause for women's entry into the industry. 75% of the women have taken up work due to this reason and the rest due to illness or death of earning members in the family. She has also tried to give a picture of the number of women involved in different crafts. She has found that in the selected villages majority of the female workforce was absorbed in traditional wool spinning activity followed by shawl making, carpet weaving and *Pashmina* spinning respectively. In her paper she has also highlighted that participation in any household industry depends mostly on the traditional character and popularity of a particular craft in that particular area.

A review of these studies on women in home based industry indicates that women work harder, toil

longer, and undergo greater pressures and yet their conditions are incomparably inferior to those of men. They have a lower social status and their role in deciding family matters is only marginal. However, the central and crucial anomaly of women's work is the social non-recognition as well as invisibility of their massive contribution to society, economy and polity.

A review of these studies on women at work in general and women in home-based industries in particular indicates that women are being unfairly treated in multiple situations and contexts within various sectors of work. Women work harder, toil longer and undergo greater pressures and yet their conditions are incomparably inferior to those of men. They have a lower social status and their role in deciding family matter is only marginal. However, the central and crucial anomaly of women's work is the social non-recognition as well as invisibility of their massive contribution to society, economy and polity. Women are pre-dominantly employed in domestic sector. Apart from their child-bearing and child-rearing activities, they have to engage themselves in countless chores and undergo severe strains. By the very nature of their work, they cannot organise or unionize and clamour for higher wages or equal remuneration. However, the overall social ambience dictates that unless you are a hard

cash earning member of the society you cannot claim or get appropriate social status or enjoy a dignified life. Women who work in the domestic sector get the worst of both the worlds. They have to engage into a wide variety of un-remunerative activities and in the process end up with no recognition and status. Therefore, the studies reviewed in this chapter forcefully bring out the glaring facts of social non-recognition and invisibility of women's work. The planners and policy makers of India will have to evolve new parameters within which to define work. India being predominantly an agricultural country, which is mostly unorganised and non-unionised and where women employees outnumber men, women's crucial economic contribution needs to be seen in keeping with the ground realities of Indian situation. The western model in which the role of industrial and commercial sector has become crucial and almost entire economy has become monetised and earning of hard cash determines the social standing of a person, cannot be replicated in India where hundreds of millions of people are engaged in domestic, agricultural and unorganised sectors. The studies recommend redefinition of work and recognition of women's economic contribution in the overall gross national product of India. The way policy makers define work and make computations thereof,

grossly violates the norms of justice in so far as women's economic role is concerned . It is being assumed that by making women's work academically visible, there will be a greater appreciation of women's work at policy and planning levels. New mechanisms will be evolved whereby women's domestic contributions can be judiciously quantified and computed so that national economic policies and programmes will be recast in a more balanced perspective wherein women get a better deal and enjoy a better social standing.

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CHAPTER - II

Research Design

The study

Throughout history we come across a number of great women who have made a remarkable contribution to the humanity. Jhansi ki Rani, Sarojini Naidu, Indira Gandhi, Mother Teresa, are a few to mention. Besides, in most of the early literature, women are projected as goddesses, fairies, embodiment of unique and superior qualities or symbol of fortune. The anomaly is that though she is considered as a super human being yet as a simple human being she has always been a target of subjugation and exploitation.

Discrimination against women from cradle to grave has become a part of our social fabric. Discrimination against her starts at a wrong note – right at her birth. She is mostly the unwanted child. Her birth doesn't augur well and is not celebrated as that of a son. Of thirteen million girls born every year, 25% do not live to see their 15th birthday. A third of these deaths occur in the first year of life, while every sixth female death was specifically due to gender discrimination¹. The girl children who survive, face the most appalling disadvantages from chronic malnutrition to educational and emotional deprivation. It is sad to note there is one rape after every 54 min, a molestation after every 26 min, a dowry death every two hours and an act of vicious cruelty every 33 minutes. These are only the cases

that are reported. A majority of such cases are never heard of.²

The cruelty begins even before her birth. The Pre-Natal Diagnostic tests developed to determine whether the foetus was suffering from any disease or defect that can prove fatal to it or to the mother, thus paving way for a decision to abort if necessary, is used against her.

In all societies woman is the central point of family organisation. It is she who strengthens the family ties and family pattern. She performs two major roles of Mother and Wife. Consequently she enjoys two major statuses in society which are of course, too demanding and time consuming to allow her to enact other roles and involve in other activities. The house work of women also involves bearing and rearing of children. These are specialized activities but not considered as productive because they are not remunerative.

The society perceives women to be confined to house-keeping, making no considerable economic contribution towards family. Employment of women is a recent phenomenon. It got impetus after the constitution enshrined certain basic rights to her and also due to industrial and technological advances. We find women taking up new professions along with men in all the fields. We have women doctors, technicians, teachers, pilots, diplomats, media personalities, Journalists, politicians etc. At the same

time we can not forget that 80% of the female work force is in the unorganised sector whose personal contributions get merged with the family and becomes invisible. They also remain outside the purview of most of the labour laws.

The plight of Kashmiri women is no better than their sisters in other parts of the Indian subcontinent. Though a considerable percentage of Kashmiri women have started taking up new professions and white collar jobs, yet at the same time we can not underestimate the role of an overwhelming majority of women in contributing towards family and society by working in the unorganised sector. From times immemorial they have been involved in multiple and major economic activities, both, within and outside their families. Women in traditional Kashmiri Society..... " besides preparing food women's most laborious work was that of husking and grinding grain. The women of the artisan class supplemented their husband's work. For example, the porters wife dug the clay for her husband and painted the pots with streaks of colour before they were baked. The shawl industry gave work to a number of women in their homes. The pashm (*Pashmina* wool) was given in its raw state to these women who spun it into the reel to different degrees of fineness. They sold it in small quantities to shop keepers in the bazar."³ This indicates not only about the different household activities in which women were

involved, but also about the role women have been playing historically in the handicraft industry.

Despite industrialization and urbanization, there are number of economic spheres which are dependent on the labour of skilled hands. An analysis of one such area, which employs Kashmiri Women in large numbers, is the subject matter of the study. Such an economic sphere in J & K is the handicraft industry. For centuries Kashmir has earned tremendous fame due to its handicrafts. The beauty of Kashmir is incomplete without a mention of its handicrafts. This industry is one of the big employers of the State. There are around 3 Lac artisans involved in different crafts. Table I gives a craft-wise employment of the handicraft industry. Though both men and women are equally involved in producing marvelous pieces of exquisite quality and craftsmanship, there are certain crafts in which women's role is predominant and in some crafts men are mostly predominant. However, the irony is that the number of women vis-à-vis men in a particular craft is not known despite the fact that State Directorate of Handicrafts has worked out an overall estimation of the artisans involved in the handicraft industry. In addition to this there are a number of artisans a particularly woman who have adopted it as a household occupation and whose strength is virtually difficult to assess. *The handicraft industry of Kashmir is an*

TABLE 1

Estimated Craft-wise employment of handicraft Industry

S.No	Year	Carpet	Nanda	Crewel	Wood Carving	Papier Machine	Fur & Leather	Chain stitch	Woolen shawls	Other handicrafts	Total
1.	1974-75	0.64	0.02	0.40	0.02	0.01	0.003	-	0.27	0.40	0.80
2.	1976-77	0.06	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.01	0.004	0.001	0.28	0.44	0.87
3.	1980-81	0.47	0.02	0.16	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.37	0.33	1.44
4.	1981-82	0.49	0.02	0.18	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.39	0.34	1.51
5.	1982-83	0.56	0.02	0.20	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.41	0.37	1.65
6.	1983-84	0.60	0.02	0.22	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.01	0.42	0.38	1.74
7.	1984-85	0.61	0.03	0.23	0.03	0.05	0.03	0.01	0.43	0.38	1.80
8.	1985-86	0.62	0.03	0.23	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.02	0.43	0.40	1.85
9.	1986-87	0.63	0.04	0.24	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.03	0.44	0.41	1.90
10.	1987-88	0.64	0.04	0.24	0.04	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.45	0.42	1.95
11.	1988-89	0.64	0.04	0.25	0.05	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.46	0.44	2.00
12.	1989-90	0.68	0.04	0.25	0.05	0.06	0.04	0.03	0.48	0.47	2.10
13.	1990-91	0.74	0.05	0.27	0.06	0.06	0.04	0.03	0.51	0.49	2.25
14.	1991-92	0.71	0.06	0.28	0.07	0.07	0.04	0.04	0.56	0.58	2.40
15.	1992-93	0.73	0.06	0.30	0.07	0.07	0.05	0.05	0.60	0.58	2.51
16.	1993-94	0.76	0.06	0.30	0.07	0.07	0.05	0.05	0.67	0.56	2.59
17.	1994-95	0.79	0.06	0.31	-	0.07	0.05	0.05	0.70	0.65	2.70
18.	1995-96	0.79	0.06	0.32	0.07	0.07	0.05	0.05	0.72	0.65	2.78
19.	1996-97	0.80	0.07	0.32	0.07	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.74	0.70	2.90
20.	1997-98	0.82	0.07	0.34	0.08	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.77	0.72	3.00

Source: Digest of Statistics, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Planning & Development Dept., Govt., of Jammu and Kashmir, 1997-98.

export-oriented industry. It contributes a lot to State Economy and earns a considerable amount of foreign exchange for the nation. Table 2 gives an estimation of the craft-wise direct export of handicraft items. The present study attempts to highlight the role played by women in the Handicraft Sector. Though researchers have furnished various studies throughout India which highlight the 'Work' done by women in the household industry other than their domestic chores, yet no such systematic study has been conducted intensively and extensively on Kashmir, particularly in this sector. (It is important to note here that the handicraft industry is the biggest home-based industry of Kashmir in which an overwhelming majority of women work). However, Hasina Hashia⁴ has tried to highlight some of the issues, but that, too, is quite limited in its nature and scope and is confined to certain villages of the Kashmir Valley. The rural women's work on family farms for long hours and also in handicraft sector, particularly in slack season, cannot be overlooked. At the same time it is imperative to know how does an urban woman, (usually an illiterate, semi educated or at times educated to a certain level), earn to supplement the family income. The contribution of these urban women to their family income, particularly in a patriarchal society, that discourages the freedom and liberty to women, always remains invisible.

TABLE 2

Craft-wise direct export of handicraft items
Value of export (RS. In crores)

S.No	Year	Carpet	Namda	Crewel embroidery	Wood carving	Papier machine	Fur & leather	Chain stitch goods	Woolen shawls	Other handicraft	Totals
1.	1974-1975	1.06	1.23	1.26	1.25	1.31	-	-	-	1.29	7.50
2.	1976-1977	3.50	1.90	2.15	1.70	2.10	-	-	-	1.51	14.86
3.	1978-1979	12.10	0.80	1.56	0.62	1.61	1.51	0.22	1.21	0.35	19.98
4.	1980-1981	26.80	1.23	2.75	1.32	1.85	3.29	0.24	1.32	1.12	39.92
5.	1981-1982	24.25	1.09	2.53	1.10	1.50	2.00	0.30	1.75	1.66	36.18
6.	1982-1983	23.10	0.99	2.97	1.52	1.65	-	0.26	1.39	1.32	33.20
7.	1983-1984	22.20	1.48	3.70	1.85	2.22	-	0.74	2.22	2.59	37.00
8.	1984-1985	20.35	1.36	3.39	1.69	2.03	-	0.67	2.03	2.39	33.91
9.	1985-1986	24.00	1.60	4.00	2.00	2.40	-	0.80	2.40	2.80	40.00
10.	1986-1987	27.00	1.20	3.86	1.60	2.10	-	1.03	3.10	3.27	43.16
11.	1987-1988	48.29	1.89	1.10	1.70	1.80	-	0.49	6.85	0.50	62.62
12.	1988-1989	50.20	1.81	1.78	1.49	2.48	-	1.00	6.00	1.07	65.83
13.	1989-1990	41.85	0.47	0.73	0.61	0.54	-	3.21	3.06	0.25	50.72
14.	1990-1991	26.41	0.06	1.26	0.47	1.83	-	1.29	20.78	0.50	34.60
15.	1991-1992	109.01	0.16	0.99	5.09	8.27	-	1.40	5.22	0.80	130.94
16.	1992-1993	138.47	2.45	2.41	1.24	8.44	-	4.80	9.44	0.75	168.00
17.	1993-1994	92.75	2.82	4.08	3.19	9.84	-	6.39	86.98	7.21	213.36
18.	1994-1995	42.26	2.11	1.04	9.25	13.76	-	8.94	26.12	88.20	111.68
19.	1995-1996	260.00	2.50	0.42	0.75	8.75	-	5.87	13.50	1.71	293.20
20.	1996-1997	20.57	-	-	0.58	16.98	-	2.59	4.02	43.40	88.14
21.	1997-1998	253.18	7.12*	-	1.54	9.10	-	-	27.00	6.24	304.00

* Including crewel and chain stitch

Source: Ibid

Therefore, the present study is an effort towards an analysis and classification of the 'invisibility phenomenon' of urban women's work; its nature and its relationship with the family income in particular and the total state economy in general. The focus of the present study is the urban Muslim women of Srinagar city. These women are mostly clustered in the high-density areas of old city.

Objectives of the Study

Though the broad research objective of the present evaluation was to throw light on the role played by women in the Handicraft Sector, the specific objectives around which the present study was built are:

- To analyse the socio-economic and educational background of artisan women.
- To analyse the nature and type of work done by them.
- To discover the wages/earnings of the female artisans engaged in different handicrafts.
- To ascertain the control over the earnings of the female artisans.
- To explore the conditions under which the female artisans have opted for this role.

- To analyse the duality of role and the problems faced by the female artisans.
- To analyse the role of female artisans in the decision making process of the family.
- To study the perceptions /aspirations of the female artisans vis-à-vis job satisfaction, rights of Muslim women, education and changing role of women.

Hypotheses:

In the context of above objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated.

- Artisan women belong to a lower socio-economic and educational background.
- The level of education among the artisan women is generally low.
- Female artisan's earnings raise the overall economic status of the family.
- Artisan women's working hours in home-based industry is equivalent to that of a factory worker.
- The middlemen in terms of mode and payment of wages exploit female artisans.
- Artisan women are conscious about their low wages in view of the amount of labour they put in.
- Artisan women are forced to work on low wages, as they have no other better profession to rely on.

- Married artisan women feel over-burdened/strained as compared to unmarried artisan women due to duality of their roles.
- Artisan women's role in the decision making process of the family is only marginal.
- The female artisans are not aware about their rights.
- The attitude of artisan women towards traditional value system, which assigns lower position to women than men, is changing.

The Universe:

Handicrafts of Kashmir have earned a distinct reputation throughout the world. This reputation rests chiefly on the city of Srinagar. However, ramifications of the industry are seen in other districts of the Valley except Anantnag District which is itself famous for indigenous Gabba making. Srinagar being the most important commercial centre of the state, the middlemen from rural areas too come to Srinagar to sell their products. Srinagar city was chosen as the locale of the present study with main thrust on centre/heart of the Srinagar city. The choice of the Srinagar was done due to following reasons: Firstly, the role of the rural women on family farms though still invisible in national statistical reports is known to all. The researcher wanted to see how urban especially city dweller

women mostly illiterate or semi-educated earn their livelihood within the four walls of their house. Secondly, although a good number of rural women are involved in handicrafts such as Numdah, Carpet-weaving, Shawl embroidery etc. However most of these women do the handicraft work seasonally i.e. during the slack season of winter when virtually no agricultural activity can be carried in the valley. Against them women artisans of Srinagar city are perennially engaged in handicraft work to supplement their family incomes and in many cases raise entire families on the modest earnings they manage through their skill. Thirdly, the researcher herself belongs to the Srinagar city, and is familiar with its demographic structure as well as its culture and language.

Handicrafts in Kashmir

The valley of Kashmir leaves lasting impression of its scenic beauty, serene lakes, rushing streamlets and grottoes on every visitor that happens to visit the valley. Artists and craftsmen imbibe a keen sense for detail. Born in the valley cannot remain unimpressed by their surroundings. Kashmiri craftsmen, therefore, produce very exquisite and intricate designs on shawls, carpets, walnut wood, namdah, papier machie etc. The arts and crafts of Kashmir are appreciated by most visitors. In fact, every Indian or Foreign visitor takes home a piece of any craft as a souvenir.

Kashmiri handicrafts have reached most corners of the world and fascinated the aesthetic and sophisticated tastes of customers from U.K, U.S.A., Canada, Australia, East Africa, Middle East, Germany etc. Mention may particularly be made of the following crafts of Srinagar (Census – 1981).

- Ø Embroidery
- Ø Shawls
- Ø Woolen articles
- Ø Silk
- Ø Silver crafts
- Ø Jewelry
- Ø Furs
- Ø Wood work
- Ø Papier machie
- Ø Namda (felts)
- Ø Rugs (chain stiched)

- Ø Carpets
- Ø Willow
- Ø Leather work (embroidered)

Embroideries are of several types and is done on different materials (rug, felt, and hand woven clothes) either with a needle, hook called *soozni* or aari *kaam* in local dialect. In the embroidery sector and in the spinning operations it is the women who are the most predominant. It is of course the embroidery, which gives the following crafts a different meaning:

Shawl

Kashmir valley has long been known for its shawls. The major production in shawls today is of the embroidered type-hook or needle embroidered with the base cloth woven out of *raffal* woolen yarn. The *jamavar* for its meticulous workmanship delight every one. The finest shawls (Pashmina) are made of the under-fleece of a mountain goat found in Ladakh and Central Asia. A super variety is *Shahtoosh* or “King of wool” which can even pass through a finger ring. Embroidery with needle *soozni* adds grace to it.



**THE MOST CHERISHED
ACQUISITION IN THE WORLD**



A WOMAN ARTISAN AT WORK WITH CROCHET EMBROIDRING SHAWL



KASHMIRI WOMEN COMBING AND SPINNING SHAH-TOOSH



ANTELOPE: THE SOURCE OF SHAHTOOSH



SHAHTOOSH SHAWL THE WARMEST FABRIC IN THE WORLD, YET SO
RESILIENT THAT IT CAN PASS THROUGH A RING



Pashmina goat.

SOURCE OF PASHMINA WOOL

Crewel Embroidery

Crewel embroidery is generally used for drapery and upholstery. The embroidery is done in thick woolen yarn on hand woven cloth by a pointed hook that resembles more or less the crochet. The craft has developed with a distinct local flavour and is practiced on a vast scale-the range extending from curtains to costumes. Ladies bags and other such items are also embroidered in this style.*



Crewel Embroidery, wonderful item for drapes and upholsteries

Namdah

The namdah is a hand made felt rug that makes excellent and rather inexpensive flooring for winters, introduced into Kashmir from Yarkand only a century or so ago. Made of 100% pressed wool or wool and cotton in different proportions (60:40) it is spread evenly over a mat and then rolled and pressed for felting. The felted piece is then milled, washed and left for drying. The embroidery is known as Jalakdozi and is done with a tambour needle or hook. Embroidered felts are among the most artistic textiles of Kashmir.*



Namdhas : an excellent and inexpensive flooring in winter

Chain stitch Rug

The chain stitch rug, an innovation recently introduced, is an inexpensive substitute for the pile carpet, it is a floor covering and wall hanging in one. As the name suggests, chain stitch is the continued stitch done with the hook. The embroidery is done all-over on a hessian or hand woven cloth based with a hook. The artisan and embroiders the cloth in 2 to 3 ply woollen yarn. The silk and staple is used some times to make the rug better in quality. A gunny cloth lining adds to the durability of the rug*.



Chainstitch: for exquisite wall hangings and floorings

Carpet:

The hand-knotted carpet of Kashmir is one of the most coveted of floor coverings in the world. The fascinating range of its designs, the luxurious softness and resilience of its pile and the vivaciousness of its colours makes it a creation of art. A painting in textile, at once decorative and functional - a rare combination it holds sway in the international markets for its exquisite quality.

Carpet weaving is said to have been introduced into Kashmir from Persia and Central Asia. It flourished under the Mughals but really came into its stride in the 19th. Century when some British firms organised it along with commercial lines.

The weaving is guided by patterns drawer's designs, known as *Talim*, which is committed to paper in a coded script, indicating number and colour. Fineness of the wool (or silk as the case may be) and the number of knots to the square inch are factors that determine the quality of a carpet and hence its value.

Design and style in Kashmiri carpets continues to be chiefly inspired by Oriental rugs of Persia and Central Asia , though a number of attractive variants have also been introduced. Characteristically Kashmiri designs reflecting the scenic beauty of the Valley have also been evolved.*



Papier Machie:

A highly popular craft practiced and pursued in Kashmir today is the papier machie. A wide range of products that suits almost every purse and preference is available from the artisan. This includes flower-vases, wall plaques, bowls, trays and boxes of different shapes and sizes, bangles, mirror cases, caskets, lamp-bases, screens etc. In making of a papier machie object, the important processes involved those of preparation of moulds, use of pulp, application of colours and designing. Gold powder is used to embellish elegance of the painted object. Till recently papier machie was an exclusively preserve of the male artisans. However, due to Government's promotional effort, talented young girls today practice the craft.*



TRADITIONAL ~~OF~~ KASHMIRI WATER POT IN PAPER MACHIE

GABBA

Among unique and exquisite Handicrafts of Kashmir , Gabba is rated as common utility article by all classes of people. In kashmir as well as outside, its demand has been growing. One of the main factors for its popular image is cost that can be borne by rich and poor alike. Kashmiri gabba is like a rug produced from woolen fabrics, pieces or full, for



GABBA: A POOR MAN'S CARPET

Multipurpose use in drawing and other rooms. The Embroidery with hook in woolen yarn is done on new woolen blankets or pieces, which are stitched before embroidery.*

There are certain crafts, which are almost 100% dominated by men. They are: -



WICKER WORK



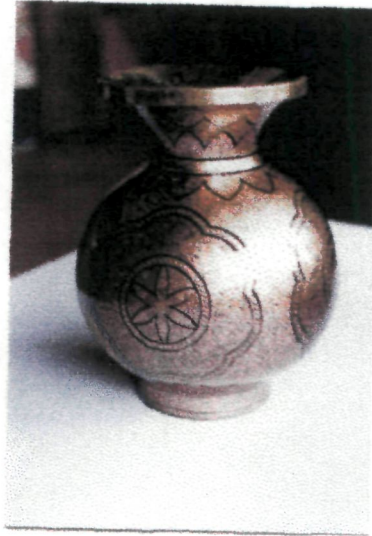
COPPER WARE: SOMAVAR –TRADITIONAL TEA POT

8/5



WOOD CARVING

69



SILVERWARE

Some important demographic features of Universe:

The State of Jammu & Kashmir is divided into three regions: Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh and each region is divided into various districts. The Kashmir region is divided into six districts with Srinagar as one amongst them. Srinagar is also the summer Capital of the State. Srinagar district is predominantly urban in character. As per 1981 census 80.50% of the total population of Srinagar is urban and the total urban population of the state is 21.05 %⁵. A complete description of the population of the state and Distt. Srinagar with male-female and urban –rural ratio is given in Table: 3 & 4

Literacy Rate: The national literacy rate in 1991 was 52.21 % in which 64.13 % were males & 39.29 were females. The overall literacy rate of the state in 1991 was 27% out of which the male literacy rate was 38.5 % and female literacy rate was 15.5%. Though there has been slight increase in the literacy rates in the state in 1997, from 27% to 31 % but still a wide disparity persists between male and female literacy levels. It is 43.35% for males and 18.78% for females which is far less than the national figures. In Srinagar district the literacy percentage of males is 60 % and for females it is 42%. An overview of the district-wise literacy rate of J&K is shown in Table 5.

TABLE-3**Some important demographic features of the State**

Description	Magnitude	
	1981 (Actual)	1991 (Estimated)
Total population	5987389	7718700
Male	3164660	4014100
Female	2822729	3704600
Rural	4726986	5879300
Urban	1260403	1839400
Urban population as percentage of total population	21.05	23.83
State population as percentage of total population of India	0.91	0.88

TABLE-4**Some important demographic features
of the Srinagar district**

Description	Magnitude	
	1981 (Actual)	1991 (Estimated)
Total population	708328	892506
Male	378189	
Female	330139	
Total Rural Population	138133	
Male	73343	
Female	64790	
Total Urban Population	570195	
Male	304846	
Female	265349	

Note : The 1991 census has not been conducted in J&K. Population figures are as projected by the Standing Committee of Experts set up by G.O.I. Population Projections, October, 1989.

Source: Digest of Statistics, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Planning and Development Department, J & K Govt., 1997-98.

TABLE 5
Literacy Percentage J & K 10 yearly
From 1961-1997

District	1961		1971		1981		1991		1997	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Anantnag	14	01	23	05	33	10	44	15	56	18
Pulwama	-	-	-	-	29	08	36	11	42	14
Baramullah	13	01	21	03	28	09	35	10	38	16
Kupwara	-	-	-	-	25	04	27	06	32	07
Srinagar	21	07	29	12	41	25	52	32	60	42
Badgam	-	-	-	-	24	06	27	07	29	08
Leh	15	01	22	02	35	11	41	13	45	11
Kargail	-	-	-	-	29	03	31	05	33	07
Jammu	25	10	39	20	52	33	58	40	64	52
Udhampur	13	03	22	07	32	13	36	14	40	15
Kathua	17	04	30	12	41	21	47	26	51	27
Doda	14	01	22	04	29	07	32	09	36	11
Poonch	14	02	23	05	32	10	37	12	41	14
Rajouri	12	02	22	05	32	14	36	17	40	21
State	15.9	3.1	25.3	7.5	33	12.42	38.5	15.5	43.35	18.78
Total	9.5		16.4		22.71		27		31.06	

Source : NSSO

Work force: At the national level, as per 1991 census the total number of main workers is 34.1 %, out of which 50.9 % are males and 15.9 % are female. Out of this the rural male main workers is 51.8% and female main workers constitute 18.6 %, while as the urban male main workers are 48.6 % and female workers are 12.81%.⁶

The total work force of the Jammu & Kashmir and Distt. Srinagar as per 1981 census is given in the Table 6 & 7. The table reveals that in Srinagar district, the total number of male main workers is exceedingly higher as compared to females. However the total number of female marginal workers is far higher than male marginal workers.

The district wise occupational classification of the working force of the state and Srinagar district is shown in Table 8. The total numbers of persons especially female shown in the household industry are appallingly low and are difficult to accept. Dabla ⁷, pointed out in his study that around 60% females are involved in the handicraft sector in the home based industry. At the national level, as per 1991 census, the total number of persons involved in household sector is 5.48% out of which 2.03% were males & 3.45% are females. The ratio of female household workers is far higher than the male workers at the national level. This is due to the fact that women apart from their household

TABLE 6
Working force by area – 1981

District	Main Workers			Marginal Workers			Non-Workers		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Srinagar	45911	167463	213374	26363	7485	33828	65859	395267	461126
State	1454040	364531	1818571	801927	29546	831473	2471019	866326	3337345

TABLE 7
Working force by sex – 1981 (numbers)

District	Main Workers			Marginal Workers			Non-Workers			Workers as % age to Total pop
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Srinagar	196050	17324	213374	2945	30883	33828	179194	281932	461126	30.12
State	1651846	166725	1818571	114369	717104	831473	1398445	11938900	3337345	30.37

Source: Op.cit Digest of Statistics

TABLE 8
Occupational Classification of Working force - 1981

District	Cultivators		Agricultural Labourers		Livestock forestry-fishing hunting etc.		Mining & Quarrying		Manufacturing servicing Household industry	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Srinagar	32454	3131	5329	384	7470	370	775	6	26260	4885
State	928027	105870	59890	3650	59438	4861	3209	87	78600	17732

Processing and Repairs other than household industry		Construction		Trade and Commerce		Transport storage and communications		Other Services		Total	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
31194	1983	6505	84	27194	552	16825	122	42044	5807	196050	17732
99957	8092	49827	1686	99831	1576	56677	759	216393	22415	1651846	166000

Source: Op.cit. Digest of Statistics

chores are involved in one or the other gainful economic activity within the premises of their households.

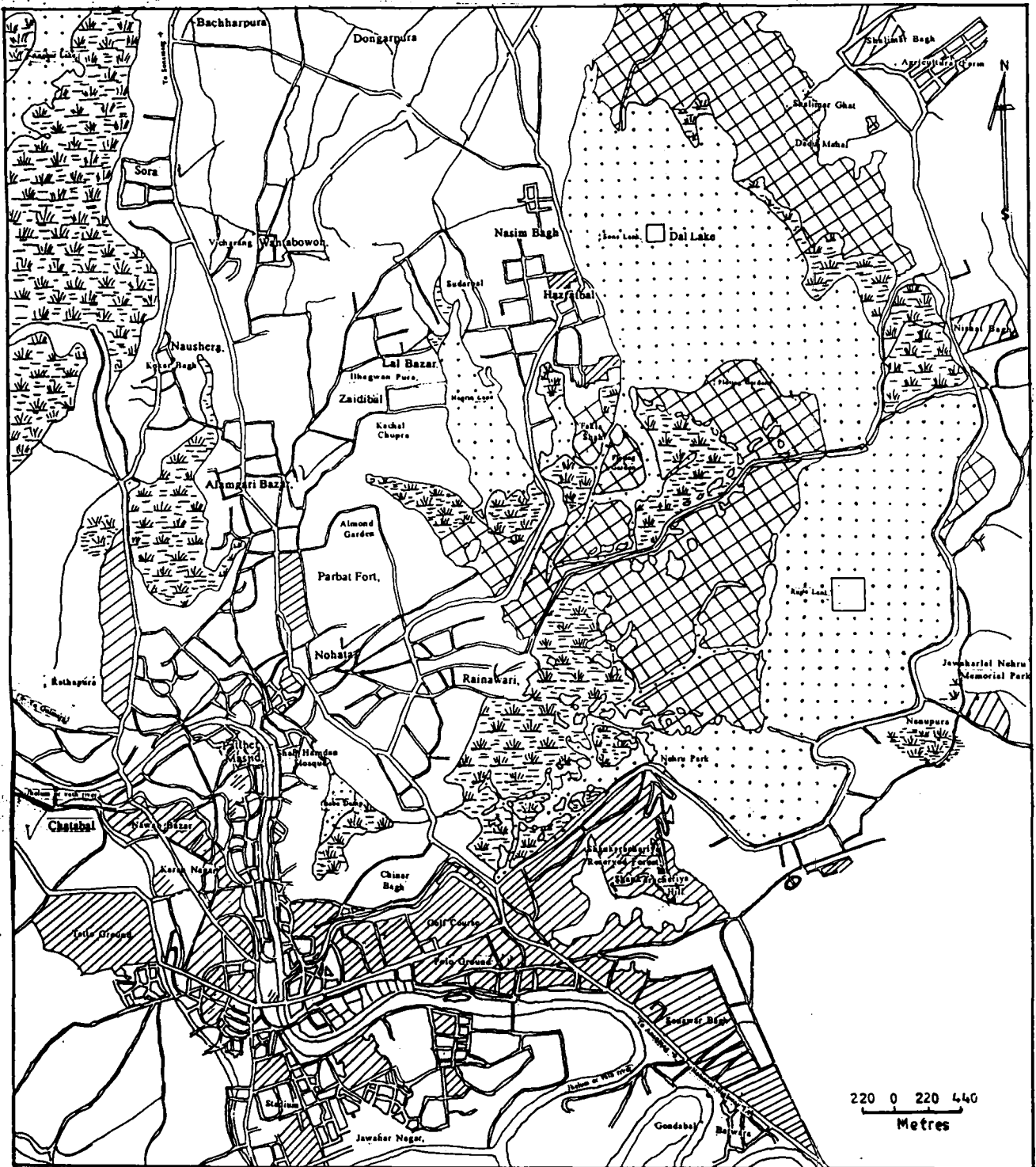
Sample Selection : The Srinagar district can broadly be divided into Municipality limits and the rural areas. The Municipality area comprises of 23 wards, of which 16 fall in the Down Town area or the old city and the remaining 7 fall in the Uptown. Each ward comprises of various smaller units locally called Mohallas. The seven wards that fall in the Uptown area include Nishat, Dalgate, Amira Kadal, Jawahar Nagar, Chan Pora, Rawal-pora, and Batamallo. These areas are mostly inhabited by the upper middle class and the upper class of the society. Therefore, the population of the artisan women in these areas is very thin. The artisan women are concentrated mostly in Downtown Srinagar, comprising of 16 wards. Therefore the sample was selected only from the Downtown. Out of 16 wards, 8 wards were randomly selected, again from each ward two Mohallas were randomly selected. Before selecting a ward or a Mohallas they were numbered. The numbers were written on paper slips and the Wards or Mohallas were selected by drawing the lots. From each ward 25 artisan women were taken for the sample, 13 from the 1st Mohalla and 12 from the 2nd Mohalla. This way a random sample of 200 was drawn.

The selection of artisan women for this research was not an easy job. The researcher found too many unwilling

artisans and many closed doors. The artisan women found it difficult to share the information with a stranger and most of them were apprehensive that the data collected may be misused by the researcher for her own economic benefits. Therefore a random selection of the households within each randomly selected Mohalla and the selection of artisan women became difficult, almost impossible. Therefore the researcher followed, what can be termed as a "snow ball" way of selecting the artisan women. In this case once a women artisan cooperated, she provided the addresses of other artisan women or at times accompanied the researcher to another fellow artisan's home till the desired number from each Mohalla was drawn.

Since there is hardly any reliable statistical data of artisan women in Srinagar available, the researcher, therefore, had to rely on the primary data collected during the study in order to highlight the amount of work the artisan women do. Owing to the constraints of resources and finance the sample of only 200 artisan women was selected. The sample of these 200 women was selected from 200 households, though in some households 2 or more women were involved in the same craft (usually sisters or mother/daughter).

MAP OF SRINAGAR



Selection of case studies:

Sometimes statistical analysis fails to reveal the reality. The investigator was quite conscious about the limitations of quantitative method. Keeping this perspective in view some case studies were prepared to verify the genuineness of the findings. These case-studies are presented not only to elaborate and substantiate the statistical evidence but also to present human dimensions which percentages rarely depict. The purpose of including case studies is also to give a feel about the life-world of these artisan women.

Out of the total sample of 200 it was decided to select 5% of the sample for the case studies. For the selection of this 5% of the respondents (i.e. 10 women) for an in-depth understanding, every 20th artisan woman was selected for the case study. For the case study, in addition to the prepared interview schedule, the researcher spend lot of time with each one of these women, watching their activities and observing their behaviour. In several sitting with each of them, an informal discussion was also initiated.

Interview of the middlemen:

To understand the working pattern of the handicraft industry in un-organised, home based sector, the researcher

found it fit to interview some agents, middlemen or the big dealers. Therefore 10 agents and 10 dealers were also interviewed. This was also necessitated to cross check some of the information provided by the artisan women.

Construction of the basic tool for inquiry:

It is significant to note that, in spite of the fact that a large number of artisan women are working in this household industry, hardly any statistical data about them was available. These women do not statistically exist as workers, and they share the fate of the most women engaged in un-organized sector. Besides, no elaborate and intensive study has been conducted on these women. However, the studies of Mies,⁸ Karlekar⁹ Ramu,¹⁰ Sharma,¹¹ Majumdar¹² Ramanama and Bambawala¹³, Banerjee¹⁴, etc. proved quite fruitful in building some theoretical assumptions and parameters for the method of inquiry. A critical examination of these studies helped to form the basis of an outline including the desirable items to be included for the in-depth study of the female artisans. The interview schedule with the total 80 questions was prepared. It was pre-tested on 25 cases. This pre-testing tested the validity and reliability of the interview schedule. These 25 artisan women were interviewed and their responses recorded. The responses were codified and calculations in terms of percentages taken

out. Once this was done problems and pitfalls were identified and eliminated. Certain questions were dropped and some more incorporated. The language of some of the questions was changed in order to make them understandable by the female artisans. The pre-testing helped in formulating the final shape of interview schedule. The final interview schedule had 63 questions.

The interview schedule included questions pertaining to the following areas: Part I had questions on socio demographic characteristics of the respondents such as name, age, marital status, income, income of husband/parents, education of the respondent and parents / husbands, type of family, family size, total income from all sources etc.

Part II consisted of questions like nature and type of work done by female artisans, their earnings and their control over it, wages and adequacy of wages etc.

Part III contained questions related to the different activities of the female artisan in a day, like time spent on household chores, handicraft work, leisure time, fatigue, managing household responsibilities, motivation behind this profession, outing, her role in decision making, job satisfaction etc.

Part IV of the interview schedule contained questions regarding perceptions and aspirations; for example

discrimination of a woman vis-a-vis man, future of their children, inheritance rights, education of woman etc. The interview schedule is attached as appendix A.

Method:

The interview schedule was the principal method of data collection. Out of a total sample of 200 artisan women, 190 respondents were selected for quantitative analysis and 10 for the case studies. Keeping in view the objectives of the study the combined method of both quantitative and qualitative in-depth studies was used. For the first level of the study i.e. quantitative analysis, interview schedule with both closed and open-ended questions was constructed and administered to the respondents. In closed questions the artisan women had to choose the appropriate answer according to their own judgement, understanding and experience. In open-ended questions the researcher gave them full opportunity to reveal their own wishes, feelings and judgements. According to Cannall and Kahn¹⁵ there are five considerations relevant to choosing between open-ended and closed questions: 1) Interview objectives 2) respondent information level 3) structure of respondent opinions 4) respondent motivation to communicate and 5) initial interviewer knowledge of the proceeding respondent characteristics. “ Typically, the more knowledge one has

about an issue, the safer it is to ask questions in a closed response format. The less one knows, the greater the risk of error in using closed-response format.”¹⁶

For the second level i.e. the qualitative, case studies were conducted. For this focus interviews of artisan women were held in their own settings. This was our focus group comprising of 10 artisan women where understanding of the personal or human dimensions of the artisan women was tried to discover. The interviews were focused on the items which were in our interview schedule, but a free choice was given to them to discuss any topic related to their day to day life. These interviews were tape recorded by the researcher. The detailed qualitative statements reported in this study are drawn from these interviews.

Preliminary Survey:

Before actual field survey and data collection a preliminary survey in the city of Srinagar was conducted. Since no reliable statistical data about the female artisans was available, therefore their concentration in various pockets of the city can hardly be pre-determined. In view of the same, 10 middlemen and some dealers were interviewed in order to know the concentration of the respondents. Their responses revealed that these women

mostly belong to lower income groups and their concentration is highest in the Downtown Srinagar.

The preliminary survey also revealed that all artisan women belong to Muslim community and no evidence of non-muslims in this industry was found. It is because of the dominance of the Muslim population in the valley. In addition to this, all the Hindus migrated from the Valley after the onslaught of turmoil in 1990. As a result, only Muslims and small percentages of Sikhs are left in the Valley. (Table -9)

Data Collection:

The middlemen contacted during the preliminary survey provided addresses of some artisan women in different localities and also introduced the researcher to some of them. The researcher contacted these artisan women. To secure their co-operation the researcher would give a brief introduction of herself as well as explain why and what for the study was being conducted. After establishing liaison, their interviews were taken. These artisan women also provided the researcher the addresses of other fellow artisan women or at times accompanied her to their houses. This procedure was followed till the required number of interviews from each selected locality / Mohalla were taken.

TABLE - 9

Percentage of population of J & K by religion

	Year	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh	Christian	Buddhist	Others	Total
State	1981	32.24	64.19	2.23	0.14	1.17	0.03	100
Srinagar	1981	8.39	90.65	0.90	0.03	0.02	0.01	100

Source: Op.cit Digest of Statistics

Therefore, for the final collection of data the researcher personally conducted a door to door survey of two hundred households in the old city of Srinagar. She interviewed/ interacted with the respondents, to gather the requisite information. The responses were recorded carefully on the interview schedules. However, for case studies tape recorder was used. All the interviews of artisan women were held in their own homes. Mostly, the artisan women preferred to be interviewed in the company of fellow artisan women who were either their friends or neighbours.

Data processing and Analysis:

After completing the investigation and recording the interviews, the processing of the data was initiated. First of all, the interview schedule was checked and edited. Errors and omissions in recording the answers were located. It was found that they were a few and of minor nature.

For the quantitative analysis of 190 respondents.. the data was codified. A separate code was assigned to each of the questions and each of the responses and feeded to the computer. Coded data was categorized with the categorizing plan prepared for the purpose. However, the responses of the open-ended questions were separately analysed. Percentages of the responses were calculated and inferences drawn.

The aim of presenting the illustrations of some of the cases was not to give any statistical precision, but to give a feel about the life of the artisan women. Therefore, the case-material is presented in a biographical form, which is quite revealing and self-explanatory. A gist of the interviews of the middlemen is also presented in the same form. The tape-recorded interviews of the artisan women as well as middlemen were carefully listened and a summary of each of the case was prepared. Certain portions were deleted which were not found relevant to the present area of inquiry.

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- ** Photographs - courtesy State Directorate of handicrafts, J & K Govt.

*Interpretation
and Analysis of
Quantitative
Data*

I

Artisans Women: Socio-economic & Educational Background

Equality is a complex notion and relative to ideologies and perspectives. Its manifestation and practice is subject to various controversies. It is generally rationalized according to personal views and social ethos. The stereotypes in men's world type-cast women as inferior to men because they feel that women lack many abilities and qualities that men possess and further ascribe these weaknesses of women to their biological differences and natural endowments. "These explanations" writes Krishna Raj Maithrayi," are, however, the outcome of post-hoc rationalization. She further argues:

*"Feed a woman less, allow her less freedom to move in fresh air, confine her to monotonous chores, deny her education and deny her exercise of her faculties and then inevitably we have women who are frail, stupid, lacking in imagination and so on."*¹

The problems associated with the concept of equality particularly between genders, create wide range of controversies and initiate a lot of discussion. However, it

is agreed by all that human beings should have equal opportunity to develop their potentialities, equal opportunity to share the privileges of society and equal opportunity to lead life as human being. But in practice as Nehru pointed out in the Discovery of India: the spirit of age is in favour of equality although practice denies it almost everywhere.²

Both men and women differ in their biological capacities. The biological capacity of the females to produce and bring up young ones has led to their being assigned roles which have progressively tied them to home only. It is further said that employment of women in salaried jobs particularly in organised sector is in itself a modern phenomenon and it is after granting them some basic rights and educational opportunities that the women are seen taking part in economic sector of the society. This is true of those 10% women working in organised sector, but the unorganised sector in which remaining 90% women work force is involved, is so vast that its parameters are difficult to identify. As a result, their contributions have always remained hidden though they have been performing the role of a bread winner of a family if the situation so demanded or supplementing otherwise meagre income of their families. Although their household chores including bearing and rearing of

children are arduous, yet they get no recognition for this work. This is true of all the women belonging to different regions including Kashmiri women. The Kashmiri women too from times immemorial have worked along with their male counterparts in all spheres of life. This is true of not only rural women who work in agricultural fields along with their men, but also of urban women of different occupational groups who work to earn their livelihood.

In the changing economic scenario of Kashmir a good number of educated women are working outside their families and get regular salaries for their work. On the other hand a large segment of the illiterate or semi-literate women are involved in handicraft sector. The handicraft industry in Kashmir is a home-based industry which feeds lakhs of rural and urban poor women.

The present study is aimed to highlight the role women play in handicraft sector. The socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the artisan women, nature and type of handicraft work they do, their earnings and their control over their own earnings, their problems and prospects and above all their contribution to family and society at large are some of the objectives the study is aimed at.

A household survey was conducted involving 200 women (190 for quantitative analysis and another 10

women for case studies) in old city of Srinagar provided a factual basis to understand and assess these objectives. A detailed account of the demographic, socio-economic and educational background of the artisan women is given in the following pages. The data is shown in percentages.

A. Age and Marital status of the artisan women:

The age and marital status of the women was not a criteria for the selection of the sample, because both married and unmarried women form almost an equal proportion in handcraft sector. However, our analysis revealed that among the married women the lower age limit was 25 and among the unmarried it was 15 years. 50% of the married artisan women were among the age group of 36 - 45 years and 59.25% of the un-married women were in the age of 15-20 years.

The analysis of 190 artisan women selected for the sample revealed, that 36.31% were married, 6.84% were either widows or divorcee/separated and 56.84% were unmarried. These divorcees or deserted women were solely dependent on the income from handicraft work for their sustenance. **Table 1** shows the marital status of these artisan women and **Table 2** reveals the age group of both married and unmarried women. For the sake of age

grouping, the widows and the divorcee/separated women have been incorporated in the category of married women.

B. Education of the Artisan Women:

Table 3 reveals the educational status of the artisan women. The analysis clearly indicates that illiterate women form the major chunk of these artisan women, both among married and unmarried. However, the overall educational level among the unmarried women was much higher as compared to married women. The literacy rate was around 48% among the unmarried women and just around 12% among the married women. This wide gap in the literacy rate of married and unmarried women is a result of the changing position of women in modern times. As with every passing decade the importance of women's education is being realized and, therefore, the educational status of women is also increasing. Similarly, among the artisan women this educational disparity has a close association with the age of the respondents as among unmarried artisan women a majority (95%) belong to the age group of 15-25 years (see **Table 2**, 59.25% + 35.18%),

and majority of married artisan women 90.5% belong to 25-45 years (39.03% + 51.2%)

There are more illiterates among married artisan women 87.80% against 51.85% among unmarried artisan women. The educational level of the unmarried artisan women is also higher than the married ones. The study revealed that 1.85% of the unmarried artisans have done graduation, 9.2 have done 12th, 3.70 have passed matriculation against nil among the married artisans. Even the percentage of primary and middle level education of unmarried artisan women is far higher than the married female artisans. On the whole there are more illiterate artisan women (67.36 %) as compared to educated one's.

C. Socio-Economic and Educational Background of the Female Artisan families:

To know the socio economic and educational background of the artisan women, the following aspects were dealt with:

C1) Husbands/Parents Education:

The married artisan women were asked about the educational level of their husbands, whereas unmarried artisan women about their parents. Again the study

revealed that the majority of the female artisan families have an illiterate background. Since there is a wide gap between male and female education rate in whole of India, the present study also revealed the same. The illiterate married artisan women out-numbered their husbands. Similarly among the unmarried artisan women's parents, the number of illiterate mothers was more than the number of their illiterate fathers.

Jammu & Kashmir is one of the educationally backward states of India. The present study also testified this statement, as among the artisan women's husbands 63.41% are illiterate and among the respondent's parents 75.92% fathers and 100% mothers are illiterate. However, much difference was not found with regard to educational level of their husband's/father's. **Table 4** gives a detailed description of artisan women's husband's and parent's educational qualifications.

C2) Husband's / Parent's Profession:

Again the married respondents were asked about their husband's profession and unmarried artisan women about their parents. Since the majority of the respondents husbands or parents were illiterate, the data showed that majority of them were involved in such professions which did not demand high educational qualifications. Another significant point which the study revealed was that the

majority of the artisan women's husband's (29.26%) and father's (44.44%) were also artisans by profession. Only 40.75% unmarried artisan women's mothers were involved in some profession. They all were artisans. A clear picture of the respondents husband's/parent's profession is shown in Table 5.

C3. Husband's/Parent's income:

In order to know the economic background of the respondents, again the married artisan women were asked about their husband's income and unmarried artisan women about their parent's income. The majority of the artisan woman's husband/parents belonged to lower income groups. The husband's income of the majority of the married respondents were found to be between Rs. 1000-3000 (around 48%) and among unmarried respondents the majority of the respondents fathers income was again between Rs. 1000-3000 (around 41%). The income group of majority of their mothers was even lower than this. It was below Rs. 1000 among 31.48% of their working mothers. Among the married artisan women (7.3%) women did not know about their husband's earnings. Their ignorance about the income of their husbands speaks volumes about the overall status of these women in the family. The income-wise distribution of the

respondents husband's/parent's is given below in **Table No. 6**. The income has been calculated on monthly basis.

C4. Total male/female earning members in the family:

To determine the economic background of the respondents it was felt necessary to ascertain the total number of male/female earning members in the artisan's family. This was done to see how many members of a particular family work to supplement and raise the economic position of their family. The majority of the families 65.78% had only one male earning member. This is due to the fact that majority of these families were nuclear in nature. However, with respect to the female earning members, a great difference was found between married and unmarried artisan women. Among the married artisan women majority i.e. 65.85% had only one female earning member while as among unmarried artisan women majority 68.51% had two female earning members. The unmarried female artisans were found to be working along with their mothers or sisters in the same handicraft work.

Secondly, since the majority of the married artisan women belong to the age group ranging from 25 to 45 years, (see **Table 2**), their kids are small and have not reached the earning stage, therefore, majority of them

have only one male and one female earning member. The description of total male/female earning members is shown in Table 7.

C5. Family Income from all sources:

Majority of the respondents in our sample had only one male/female earning member. In order to assess the overall economic status of the family to which the artisan women belonged to, the overall family income of the respondents from all sources was calculated on monthly basis. The earnings of the respondents have also been incorporated in this category. Table 8 revealed that the total income of the majority of the artisan women was between Rs. 5001-7000 a month (39.47%) and second highest i.e. 32.10% respondents belonged to the income group of Rs. 3001 to 5000. The study revealed a wide disparity between married and unmarried artisan women. Among married respondents majority (37.80%) belonged to Rs. 3001-5000 income group and among the unmarried artisan women majority of them (50.92%) belonged to the income group of Rs. 5001-7000 per month. The reason behind this disparity between married and unmarried artisan women is that majority of unmarried respondents (68.51%) had two female earning members and in some cases (18.51%) even three female earning members (See

Table 7). This proves our hypothesis that female earning does enhance the overall economic status of a family.

C6. Type and size of the family:

The striking feature of traditional society in India, the joint family system, is fast breaking. This phenomenon is not only restricted to in big cities, but is found in small cities like Srinagar also. This statement is substantiated by the fact that 87.89% of the respondents belonged to nuclear type of families. The field survey showed that 90% of the respondents lived under the same roof, but with separate kitchen, with two to three more families who mostly were either the respondents husband's or her father's brothers. These nuclear families may be called extended nuclear families. The houses where the female artisan's usually live in houses comprised of 6 to 8 rooms and each family occupied 2-3 rooms in that house. Most of the families have constructed an additional room in the front lawn of their house, which they use as a kitchen. Almost none of the houses is having any front or back lawn except a small open space in front of the house. The

localities where the artisan women are found are quite congested. An overview of the type of family is shown in **Table 9**.

On the basis of the family size, all the families were classified into 4 categories (See **Table 9.1**). Owing to the nuclear nature of families, majority (55.78%) of the family size was small i.e. between 3-4 family members. The second highest family size of women artisans (23.68%) was between 5-6 family members. One of the striking features of the majority of the artisan women was that they were well aware about the importance of smaller families, which is evident from the fact that majority of them fall under the family size of 3 to 4 members only. The respondents having 7-10 family members usually belonged to joint families. In the families with 5-6 family members, it was mostly the respondents grand-parents or parent-in-law who were living with the respondent's family.

C7. Head of the family:

After the size and nature of family, the women artisans were asked about the head of their family.

Majority of both married and unmarried artisan women (72.63%) had a male as the head of the family, whether a father or a husband or a brother or fathers in law etc. (See **Table 10**). But still there were households, which were headed by a female. Among the married artisan women's households 29.26% were headed by the respondent herself and 4.87% by mothers-in-law; while as among unmarried respondents 22.22% households were headed by the mothers. However, it is not an indicator that the patriarchal power structure has undergone a change, because most of the women who were heading the families were either widows or divorcees/separated. The role of the other female head of the families was limited to minor domestic issues and day to day affairs. However, for major family decisions they always had to seek the consent of their husbands. **Table 10A** gives detailed statistics about the male/female heads of the families among married and unmarried artisan women.

Thus the above analysis of socio-economic and educational background of the female artisans of Srinagar revealed that these women came from lower socio-

economic background. Most of them were either illiterate or semi literate. However the educational level of unmarried female artisans was marginally higher than married female artisans. This is so owing to the fact that overwhelming majority of the female artisans were in the age group of 15-25 years and therefore they had been exposed relatively to higher education during the last two decades of the previous century. The analysis further revealed that 63.41 % husbands of married female artisans, 75.92% fathers and 100 % mothers of unmarried artisan women were totally illiterate and remaining 36.59 % husbands of married female artisans and 24.8% fathers of unmarried female artisans were barely literate or semi literate. The husbands and fathers in respective categories were either petty businessmen or small shopkeepers or artisans. Majority of the husbands of married artisan women and fathers of the unmarried artisan women were in the lower income group earning between rupees 1,000 to 3,000 per month.

Majority of the female artisans had one male earning member. However in case of unmarried female artisans

majority had more than one female earning member, whereas married female artisans had only one female earning member in majority of the cases, i.e. themselves. This phenomenon leads to a disparity in total respective incomes of married and unmarried female artisans. Whereas majority of the married artisans live within the income group of Rs. 3001-5000 per month, the unmarried female artisans live within relatively higher income group of Rs. 5001-7000 per month.

The study further showed that the tradition of joint family system is on the verge of extinction in view of the fact that about 87.89 % female artisans lived in nuclear type of family units. Most of the family units comprised of 3 to 4 family members. However, the patriarchal system in these families remained, by and large intact. Most of the families of these female artisans were headed by male members.

TABLE – 1 Marital Status of the Artisan Women		
Category	Number	Percentage
Married	69	36.31
Widow	5	2.63
Divorcee	6	3.15
Separated	2	1.05
Unmarried	108	56.84
Total	190	100

TABLE – 2 Age of the Artisan Women					
Married			Unmarried		
Age Group	No.	%age	Age Group	No.	%age
25-35	32	39.03	15-20	64	59.25
36-45	42	51.2	21-25	38	35.18
46-55	4	4.87	26-30	4	3.70
56-65	2	2.43	31-35	0	0
66-75	2	2.43	36-40	2	1.85
	82			108	

TABLE – 3						
Education	Married		Un-married		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Illiterate	72	87.80	56	51.85	128	67.36
Primary	4	4.87	22	20.37	26	13.68
Middle	6	7.31	14	12.97	20	10.52
Matric	0	-	4	3.70	4	2.10
12 th	0	-	10	9.25	10	5.26
B.A.	-	-	2	1.85	2	1.05
Total	82		108		190	

TABLE – 4						
Educational level of Husbands/Parents						
Category	Husbands		Fathers		Mothers	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Illiterate	52	63.41	82	75.92	108	100
Primary	6	7.31	-	-	-	-
Middle	12	14.63	10	9.25	-	-
10 th	8	9.75	14	12.97	-	-
12 th	2	2.43	-	-	-	-
B.A.	2	2.43	2	1.85	-	-
	82		108		108	

TABLE – 5						
Husbands/Parents Profession						
Profession	Husbands		Fathers		Mothers	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Artisan *	26	31.70	48	44.44	44	40.74
Business	13	15.85	22	20.37	-	-
Driver/ mechanic	15	18.29	-	-	-	-
Govt. Employee	14	17.7	13	12.03	-	-
Labourer	3	3.65	12	11.11	-	-
Private employee	3	3.65	5	4.62	-	-
Shop Keeper	8	9.75	8	7.40	-	-
Nil	-	-	-	-	64	59.25
	82		108		108	

* In the category of “artisan” carpenters, masons, tailors and people involved in making of different handicraft items are included.

TABLE – 6**Husband's / Parent's Income**

Income Rupees/month	Husbands		Fathers		Mothers	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Below 1000	-	-	-	-	34	31.48
1001-2000	20	24.39	23	21.29	5	4.62
2001-3000	18	21.95	42	38.88	5	4.62
3001-4000	10	12.19	15	13.88	-	-
4001-5000	4	4.87	6	5.55	-	-
5001-6000	3	3.65	2	1.85	-	-
6001-7000	3	3.65	2	1.85	-	-
Above 7000	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nil	5	6.09	8	7.40	56	51.85
Dead/divorcee	13	15.85	10	9.25	8	7.40
Don't know	6	7.31	-	-	-	-
	82		108		108	

TABLE – 7**Total male/female earning members**

No. of male members	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
0	11	13.41	13	12.03	24	12.63
1	55	67.07	70	64.81	125	65.78
2	8	9.75	17	15.74	25	13.15
3	2	2.43	8	7.40	10	5.26
4	6	7.31	-	-	6	3.15
Total	82	-	108	-	190	-
No. of Female						
1	54	65.85	14	12.96	68	35.78
2	22	26.82	74	68.51	96	50.52
3	6	7.31	20	18.51	26	13.68
Total	82		108		190	

TABLE – 8**Total income from all sources**

Income group	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Below 3000	5	6.09	2	1.85	7	3.68
3001-5000	31	37.80	30	27.77	61	32.10
5001-7000	20	24.39	55	50.92	75	39.47
7001-9000	12	14.63	15	13.88	27	14.21
9001-11000	6	7.31	2	1.85	8	4.21
11001-13000	-	-	-	-	-	-
13001-15000	2	2.43	4	3.70	6	3.15
NR	6	7.31	-	-	6	3.15
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 9						
Type of Family						
Type of Family	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Nuclear	64	78.04	103	95.37	167	87.89
Joint	18	21.95	5	4.62	23	12.10
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 9.1						
Size of Family						
No. of family members	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
3-4	47	57.31	59	54.62	106	55.78
5-6	21	25.60	24	22.22	45	23.68
7-8	12	14.63	13	12.03	25	13.15
9-10	2	2.43	12	11.11	14	7.36
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 10						
Head of the Family						
Heads of the family	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Male*	54	65.85	84	77.77	138	72.63
Female**	28	34.14	24	22.22	52	27.36
	82		108		190	

* Male includes Husband, father-in-law, son, father, brother

** Females includes self, mother-in-law, mother.

TABLE – 10-A				
Head of the Family	Married		Unmarried	
	Number	%age	Number	%age
Self	24	29.26	-	-
Husband	42	51.21	-	-
Father-in-law	10	12.18	-	-
Mother in law	4	4.87	-	-
Son	2	2.43	-	-
Father	-	-	74	68.51
Mother	-	-	24	22.22
Brother	-	-	10	9.25
	82		108	

II

ARTISAN WOMEN : WORK AND FAMILY

The household is the reference point of women's lives. Women are deeply inter-twinned with the household. Sociologists and anthropologists have been perennially studying the institution of household. The earlier sociological and anthropological focus on household did try to analyse its role in forging kin solidarity, socialisation, internalization of cultural values, norms etc. However, presently Sociologists are emphasizing the role of the household within the larger socio-economic order. The macro features of national and international socio-economic order such as systems of production, exchange of resources and access to resources do ultimately impinge on the shape of households in modern societies. The productive activities and incomes of the households are largely determined by these systemic features of the situation. However, within the precincts of the households the position of women is additionally determined by a host

of factors; for example, her being in urban or rural sector, her belonging to a lower caste or higher caste, her coming from an upper class or a lower class, her being landed or landless etc., are vital factors that determine the position of a woman within a given household. However, what is of most crucial importance in determining the status of a woman within a household is her job or career or occupation and its net cash- value.

Work is the ultimate determining factor in the modern household. Work is a defining, a characterising and an identifying force in the modern world. It shapes our physical and emotional needs, establishes our identity, and determines our economic position and hierarchies us in the complex web of social stratification. Our work determines the conditions under which we spend our countless productive hours. Thus work is the most important determinant of our quality of life.

Work as productive economic activity has always determined the social and political position of a person. For example, shorn of all meta-physical and normative trappings the ancient Indian four fold division of society

was based on the nature and type of work done by numerous castes and sub-castes. However, with increasing industrialization and technologisation, the scope and extent of work has become multi-complex. Technology has opened up a vast area of sophisticated managerial, administrative and supervisory jobs in the fields of engineering, commerce, trade, management etc., that we need highly accomplished specialists for these modern jobs. In the modern economies of Western Europe, Northern America and South Eastern parts of Asia, highly complex and exceedingly technologically sophisticated jobs are being created day in and day out.

The highly sophisticated industrial and technological occupations in Kashmir are yet to emerge. Even after the end of twentieth century, the economy of Kashmir is based on agriculture and handicrafts. It is categorically a pre-industrial, a pre-technological, and a pre-modern economy. In this economy women have been making a highly significant contribution both in the agricultural and handicraft sectors.

The role of Kashmiri women in agricultural sector has always been of vital significance. Historically speaking they have always been engaged in seeding and weeding, transplanting, transporting and collecting operations of agricultural produce, apart from engaging themselves in allied activities such as animal husbandry, poultry, fetching of fire wood and water etc. The urban women especially in Srinagar city have traditionally been actively engaged in various handicrafts such as *shawl* , *Namdah* , *chain stitch* , *Crewel*, *Gubbah*, *shahtoosh* and *pushmina spinning* , *carpet weaving*, *papier –machie* etc.

In the following pages we shall be giving an outline of the contribution of female artisans of Srinagar to the handicraft sector. We shall be mainly concentrating on the handicraft items designed by female artisans, their income and expenditure, adequacy of their wages, their motivation for the profession, their job satisfaction, their daily activities, and chores, their role in household management and decision making process of the family etc. The analysis is based on empirical data collection, through interviews of the respondents and information provided by

official and unofficial agencies in Srinagar city. The analysis is supported by tabulated statistical data. Hopefully the analysis will shed some light on the role of women in export oriented household industry of Srinagar and also bring out how the contribution is sidelined or pushed under ground through some mysterious manipulations in official data giving an account of the income generated from these handicraft sectors

A1. Type of Work Female Artisans do:

The type of work women do depends on the craft in which they are involved in. For example, Chainstich, *Crewel* and *Namda* embroidery is done with a hook. Embroidery on shawls is done both by a hook called (*Aari* – local name) or with needle (*sozni*). *Shahtoosh* and *Pashmina* are spun by the women and pashmina/shahtoosh shawls are woven by men only. In the art of Paper Machie from the making of the pulp to final designing/painting i.e. the entire product is done by women as well. See Table 11, which gives an overview of the type of work women artisans do in different crafts.

A2. Handicraft items designed by female artisans:

Handicrafts of Jammu & Kashmir consists of a variety of crafts. In order to know the nature and type of work done by women the respondents were categorized into different categories according to the handicraft items in which they were involved. Embroidering on shawl (27.36%) and crewel (25.78%) predominated the other crafts. At present, lowest number of women were involved in spinning of *shahtoosh*. This is probably due to the ban imposed on *shahtoosh* trade. The other lowest craft in which women artisans were involved is paper machie(2.63%). This is due to the fact that the said craft is dominated by men. This craft has recently been adopted by women (due to government's promotional efforts) as was supported by the fact that only unmarried women were involved in this craft. **Table 11A** gives a detailed account of different crafts in which women were involved. In carpet weaving a considerable number of young girls were involved, but they were restricted mostly to rural areas of Srinagar. In down town area of Srinagar the involvement of women in carpet weaving was almost negligible.

A3. Professional skill:

Majority of the artisan women (57.36%) whether married or unmarried have learnt their professional skill from their family members. 26.84% have learnt it from training centres, out of which 30% have learnt the skill from government-run training centres and 70% have learnt from private training centres. Private training centre are run by craft masters, usually a male who also works as a middleman between the artisan and the big dealer. However, for the last 10 years these private centres have received setback as now-a-days people do not prefer to send their daughters to these centres due to security reasons. However, government training centres are still retaining their roll. In fact the role of female trainees in some government training centres has increased manifold. This is probably because these centres also give them a certificate after the completion of the training which helps some of them to get loan from banks and from State Directorate of Handicrafts or find a government job in the handicraft sector. **Table 12** gives an overview of the sources from which the respondents have learnt their

professional skill. During the data collection the researcher could not come across any artisan woman who has got or applied for loan to setup her own centre. They even were not aware about the different schemes started by the Directorate of Handicrafts for the benefit of artisans. In fact when asked as to why they didn't get some loan, they said that procedural hustles involved in the lending operations deterred them from availing the facilities accorded to them by the concerned governmental agencies.

B1. Earnings of women artisans:

One of the important objective of our study was to discover the earnings of the women artisans. Majority of the respondents 56.89% on an average earned between Rs. 500 to 1000 per month. The second highest percentage of respondents earned Rs. 100 –1500 per month. The earnings of married and unmarried artisan women were more or less the same. The earnings of the women artisans were an important contribution towards the total earnings of the family. A clear picture of the earnings of the female artisans is given in **Table 13**.

B2. How women artisans spend their earnings?

Almost all the women artisans supplemented their family income in one or the other way. Majority of the married (58.53%) and unmarried (35.81%) artisan women gave all their earnings to their families. Their earnings, therefore, formed an important part for the very sustenance of their families. The earnings were mostly used to buy the essential commodities like food items, medicine etc. A considerable number of artisan women saved their earnings for later use. 21.95% married artisans saved all their income. These women collected their earnings coin by coin and handed it over to their families as a considerable sum for some bigger use of the family or to meet any eventuality during their bad days, 24.07% unmarried artisan women mostly saved their income for their dowry. Among the unmarried artisan women 20.57% women felt that they should not be a burden on their poor families and, therefore, they worked to earn their personal expenditures. 4.87% of the married artisan women also expressed the same opinion. Table 14 gives a detailed

account of the way the artisan women spend their earnings:

C1. Mode of Payment:

The study of the wage pattern of women artisans revealed that majority of them 59.47% were paid in terms of rupees per piece and 39.47% gave different responses, which for the sake of homogeneity have been categorised under “any other” category. The mode of wages in this category was different from craft to craft. For example in chainstich wages were given on the basis of per sq. feet. Shawl embroidery was paid on the basis of Tola, (Rs. 45.50 per Tola). One Tola is equivalent to 10 grams of stapel. Namdhas were paid on the basis of per piece. Pashmina and Shahtoosh were paid in terms of the number of threads Paper-machie is again paid on the basis of per piece. Crewel is paid in terms of per kg yarn. A great disparity, however was noticed in the wage pattern of women artisans, e.g, one *chainstich* woman artisan was paid Rs. 30 per sq. feet, another women was paid Rs 32 for the same work and yet some others were paid Rs. 35.

When the respondents were asked about this disparity, they said that it depended on the will of the middlemen

Another disparity which the respondents themselves revealed was that men were paid Rs.5 to Rs.6 more as compared to women artisans. They said that they were being told by the middleman that men's embroidery was neater than women's. The researcher was unable to substantiate the statement that women's work was inferior to men. Perhaps the male patriarchal order has been successful in creating such stereotypes so as to exploit these poor artisan women. See Table 14 for details.

C2. Wages commensurate or not:

Majority of the women artisans 78.42% said that the wages they were getting were inadequate and 15.26% revealed that the wages were adequate. A smaller percentage of 6.31% was unable to say anything. (See Table 15). One important aspect that the respondents revealed, was that though the cost of everything including the raw material had enhanced but the wages for many years had either remained the same or had increased marginally. Even the artisan women who found the wages

adequate strongly demanded that wages should be increased.

The respondents who did not find the wages adequate, were asked to state the reason as to why do they still continue the handicraft work on such low wages. **Table 15.1** gives a detailed description of the reasons mentioned by these artisan women. Majority of them said “*nothing better available*” as the reason for working on such low wages.

D1. Day of an artisan woman:

To get a clear picture about the various types of work the artisan women did and also to know about the total labour time they spent on handicraft work, the respondents were asked a variety of questions. The questions were framed in such a way as to get a feedback about the amount of time they spend on different activities, e.g. at what time do they get up and start their work, when their work ends, what do they do after the work ends, how often do they wash clothes, clean the home, cook food, etc. Their statements revealed that a working day of an artisan woman consisted of a variety of

activities, most of which fell under the category of “housework”. These activities included cooking food, washing clothes, cleaning house, washing utensils, serving the family, child care, ironing the clothes, and number of activities. Some of them also go to nearby market to buy vegetables, milk etc. Though there did not exist any demarcation among these activities and they usually overlapped each other, they were, however, usually concentrated in the morning hours, upto 10 - 11 a.m. After that they started the handicraft work till lunch. After taking lunch, they washed utensils, cut the vegetables for evening meal and again started handicraft work. Their household activities and handicraft work in most of the cases is going on simultaneously. A glimpse of the average hours spent by artisan women on different activities including handicraft work is shown in Table 16. An analysis of these hours brought to light that it is naive to treat these urban women as “housewives” and not as “workers”. The analysis of the time spent on handicraft work by the artisan women revealed that majority of them could be treated at par with factory workers.

An analysis of the married /unmarried artisan women indicated that average hours of the majority of the married artisan women were more than the average hours of an unmarried artisan women. This was also indicated by the amount of leisure time married and unmarried woman artisans usually got. (See Table 17).

Table 16.1 gives a complete overview of the time artisan women spent on different activities. The activities in the said **Table** labeled under household activities, included washing utensils, preparing children for school, serving food to the family, ironing clothes, going to grocery shop etc.

D2. Leisure Time:

The leisure time of the respondents was classified into 5 categories. There was a great difference between the leisure time of married and unmarried female artisans. Among the married respondents 32.92% did not find any leisure. The same response was given by 12.96% respondents among unmarried artisans. Among the married women artisans majority (34.14%) found 1-2 hours of leisure time while among unmarried respondents it is only

12.96%. Among unmarried artisan women, majority (50%) have given the option “*any other*”, which was usually 5-6 hours of leisure time. This is usually due to the fact that the unmarried respondents render only a helping hand in domestic activities (See Table 19) as their mothers or sisters, are solely responsible for domestic chores. Table 16.1 also reveals that a considerable proportion of respondents did not do any household activity or those who did spend lesser hours than the married respondents. Table 17 gives an idea about the amount of leisure time female artisans got per day.

When the respondents were asked about the leisure time they got, around 60% of them said they got lot of time. But when the researcher probed deeper about their activities and leisure time, a different story emerged. What “they” called “leisure” time was not “leisure” in letter and spirit but the “time when they do embroidery work spinning or the handicraft work” in which they were involved. They also didn’t consider that time as working hours when for example a *Namdha/crewel* artisan makes balls out of the yarn with which she has to do embroidery

next day, nor the time when a *pashmina/shahtoosh* worker made the reed out of the thread which she had spun. However, such type of work was incorporated in handicraft work for analysis.

D3. Spending of leisure time:

The women artisans who did find leisure time were asked how did they spend their leisure time. Their responses were varied. Among the married respondents most of the artisan women (50%) slept or relaxed. They usually slept or took a nap after lunch. While as 61.11% of the unmarried artisan women relaxed, chatted with their neighbouring friends, watched TV and did other activities. **Table 17.1** gives a brief description as to how the artisan women spent their leisure time. Among the unmarried artisans 1.85% studied their course of study as private candidates.

E1. Managing Household Responsibilities:

A great void was found between the responses of married and unmarried artisan women vis-a-vis managing of household responsibilities. Among the married respondents majority belonged to nuclear form of family.

So majority 68.29% managed the household responsibilities alone, while majority of the unmarried artisan women 66.66% rendered only a helping hand to their family members. Only 1.87% of the unmarried artisan women shared household responsibilities alone. They included those who had lost their mothers.

The respondents were further asked whether they felt over-burdened by their work. Again the majority of married women (75.60%) replied in affirmative. Majority of the unmarried respondents 57.40% said that they did not feel over burdened. **Table 18** gives us a detailed account of how the respondents managed their household responsibilities and **Table 18.1** gives an idea whether the respondents felt over burdened or not while performing dual roles. Majority of the married artisan women feel over-burdened (75.60 %), as against 40.47 % unmarried artisan women. This difference is due to the fact that though married & unmarried artisan women spent almost same time on handicraft work, yet the married female artisans feel strained as they are solely responsible for their domestic chores.

E2. Caring of Children:

Since majority of the married respondents managed household responsibilities alone, so majority of them 85.36% had to take care of their children themselves while they were at work. Again majority of the women artisans 43% stated that their children get neglected when they are engaged in work.

There was a very small percentage 4.87% of female artisans who got help in child care from their husbands and 7.31% respondents got some help from mothers-in-law. A detailed description is shown in Table 19 and 19.1.

E3. Outings:

The women artisans when asked how often did they go for outings, mentioned that society did not appreciate the roaming around of a woman aimlessly. So they go out only when it was important and had a purpose. Their outings include going to the nearby market for buying personal things; visiting their close relatives; or attending marriages/funerals etc. They hardly go out for any picnics with their families. Though the scenic beauty of Kashmir is famous world over, still 60% of these artisan women,

who live in the heart of Srinagar, had not visited any tourist spot other than Mughal gardens³ or some Muslim shrines in Srinagar or other in the Valley like Baba Rishi⁴ or Ash Muqam, etc.. Among the married artisan women majority 31.70% go for outings occasionally (that is once or twice in three months), 24.39% of them did go once in a week. Majority of the unmarried artisan women 37.03% did go for outings once in a week and 27.77% once in a month. A complete description is shown in **Table 20**.

F. Motivation behind doing handicraft work:

The factors that motivated rather compelled the female artisans to be in this profession are multifarious. However, the responses were in consonance with the responses of how do they spend their earnings. As majority of both married and unmarried artisan women give all their earnings to family, so the only motivation to be in this profession is to supplement and raise the economic status of their families. The increasing trend among the young generation to be economically independent is supported by the fact that 37.07% unmarried women worked to have an independent income,

whereas 12.19% among married artisan women also wanted to be economically independent. The varied motivational reasons for women artisans to be in handicraft profession are shown in **Table 21**.

G1. Change of job:

The female artisans were asked whether they wanted to change or give up their handicraft work. There was a difference between the responses of the married and the unmarried respondents. Majority of the married artisan women 60.97% did not want to change or give up their handicraft work and 39.20 % wanted to change or give up their handicraft work. The majority of the unmarried artisan women wanted to change or to give up their handicraft job. This is due to the fact that married women especially with nuclear families and only one male earnings member realize the importance of their earning for the subsistence of the family.

The female artisans were asked to state the reasons for changing/giving up their handicraft work. The majority of the respondents both married/ unmarried 23.15% wanted to change if they got a better job. A considerable

percentage of unmarried artisan women (8.94% and 4.73%) mentioned that they would not only change but would give up the handicraft work totally if after marriage the income of the husband was satisfactory or if the husband/in-laws objected. (See Table 22 & 22 A)

G2. Job Satisfaction:

Responses of the female artisans were sought vis-a-vis their job satisfaction. 100% married artisan women said that they were satisfied with their profession. Among the unmarried artisan women, 29.62% said “No” and 14.81% were partially satisfied. The percentile of the female artisans with regard to their job satisfaction is shown in Table 23.

H1. Participation in decision making process of the family:

To ascertain whether the women artisans took part in the decision making process of the family, the respondents were asked questions regarding various aspects (see Table 24). A great disparity was found between the married and unmarried women artisan's responses. Majority of the married women (39.02%) do take active part in all the

decisions of the family and 36.58% artisan women's consent was sought before any decision was taken. Whereas, among unmarried female artisans majority 56.48% did not take part in any decision.

The above analysis bring out that most of the female artisans of Srinagar were engaged in embroidery, and spinning operations. Coming from a lower socio-economic background these poor and illiterate artisans are engaged in long daily grinds that fetch them little in terms of monetary benefits. Most of them work from 6 to 12 hours daily and their incomes range from Rs.700 upto Rs. 1500 per month. Even this meagre income is very vital for the upkeep of their hearths. Their entire earnings are spent on domestic requirements. As all these artisans are working in un-organised sector, the mode of payment is completely unregulated and depends upon respective bargaining capacity of both the artisan women and the middlemen. A large chunk of the profits is appropriated by the middlemen and the wholesale dealers and exporters. These artisan women are conscious of their low wages, but still continue with their jobs in view of the fact that they have

no better alternative to go in for. In response to the question as to whether they were satisfied with jobs the majority of them nod affirmatively, but a deeper probing of their conditions revealed that they would readily go in for a better option, only if it was available. These artisan women are over burdened with their handicraft work coupled with their multiple domestic responsibilities. The married artisans are further over-loaded with such duties as child-rearing, cooking, washing, cleaning and other chores of day-to-day maintenance. Consequently the married women artisans have less leisure time in comparison to unmarried ones.

The married artisan women who do find some leisure time spend it by taking rest/nap after the lunch. Whereas the unmarried artisan women chat, relax, watch TV etc. during their leisure time. The outings of the artisan women consist of going to nearby market, visiting relatives or attending marriage parties etc. They go for outing either once in a week or once in a month. However, a considerable percentage of female artisans go for outings either occasionally or rarely and 3.15 % female

artisan women never come out of their homes. Majority of them reported that they never visit any picnic spot. To know whether the female artisans take any part in the decision-making process of the family, a wide gap was found between the responses of married and unmarried artisan women. The data reveals that 39.02% married artisan women do take part in the decision making process whereas almost the same percentage i.e. 36.58% just gave their consent. The majority of the unmarried artisans do not take part in any decision making process and it is mostly their fathers who take decisions either independently or in certain cases seek the advice of their mothers.

TABLE – 11						
Type of Work Female Artisans do						
Handicraft work	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Embroidery (Hook)	56	68.29	88	81.48	144	75.78
Embroidery (Needle)	4	4.87	6	5.55	10	5.26
Spinning	22	26.82	5	4.62	27	14.21
Designing/ Painting	-	-	9	8.33	9	4.73
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 11 A						
Handicraft items in which women are involved						
Handicraft	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Chainstich	11	13.41	13	12.03	24	12.63
Crewel	12	14.63	37	34.25	49	25.78
Namdha	14	17.07	15	13.88	29	15.26
Pashmina	20	24.39	7	6.48	27	14.21
Shahtoosh	2	2.43	2	1.85	4	2.10
Shawl	23	28.04	29	26.85	52	27.36
Paper machie	-	-	5	4.62	5	2.63
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 12						
Source from which respondents learnt their professional skill						
Source	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Family members	51	62.19	58	53.70	109	57.36
Training Centre	17	20.73	34	31.48	51	26.84
Friend/ Neighbour	14	17.07	16	14.81	30	15.78
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 13						
Earnings of the women artisans						
Earnings per month	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Below 500	8	9.75	13	12.03	21	11.05
501-1000	47	57.31	61	56.48	108	56.84
1001-1500	17	20.73	24	22.22	41	21.57
1501-2000	6	7.31	8	7.40	14	7.36
2001-2500	4	4.87	2	1.85	6	3.15
Total	82		108		190	

Table – 14						
How artisan women spend their income						
	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Save all the income	18	21.95	26	24.07	44	23.15
Give away all to the family	48	58.5	38	35.18	86	45.26
Contribute a part of to family	10	12.19	18	16.66	28	14.73
Spend on personal expenditures	4	4.87	22	20.37	26	13.68
Any other	2	2.43	4	3.70	6	3.15
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 14 A						
Mode of wage						
Mode of payment	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
On piece rate	45	54.87	68	62.96	113	59.47
Weekly basis	2	2.43	-	-	2	1.05
Any other, specify	35	42.68	40	37.03	75	39.47
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 15						
Wages adequate						
Wages adequate	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Yes	15	18.29	14	12.96	29	15.26
No	65	79.26	84	77.77	149	78.42
Can't say	2	2.43	10	9.25	12	6.31
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 15.1						
If No, state reasons						
Reasons	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Availability of more artisan women	-	-	6	7.14	6	4.02
Money badly required by the family	45	69.23	30	35.71	75	50.33
Nothing better available	20	30.76	48	57.14	68	45.63
	65		84		149	

TABLE – 16						
Total hours of work						
Hours	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
6-8	2	2.43	6	5.55	8	4.21
9-10	2	2.43	44	40.74	46	24.21
11-12	12	14.63	42	38.88	54	28.42
13-14	26	31.70	12	11.11	38	20.00
15-16	30	36.58	4	3.70	34	17.89
17-18	10	12.19	-	-	10	5.26
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 16.1						
Hours spend on different activities						
Activity (Hours)	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Household						
0	14	17.07	28	25.92	42	22.10
1	19	23.17	50	46.29	69	36.31
2	37	45.12	23	21.29	60	31.57

3	3	3.65	7	6.48	10	5.26
4	8	9.75	-	-	8	4.21
5	1	1.21	-	-	1	0.52
	82		108		190	
Cooking Food						
0	8	9.75	42	38.88	50	26.31
1	31	37.80	46	42.59	77	40.52
2	29	35.36	16	14.81	45	23.63
3	6	7.31	4	3.70	10	5.26
4	6	7.31	-	-	6	3.15
5	2	2.43	-	-	2	1.05
	82		108		190	
Washing Cloths						
0	4	4.87	30	27.77	34	17.89
1	60	73.77	64	59.25	124	65.26
2	18	21.95	14	12.96	32	16.84
	82		108		190	
Cleaning House						
0	4	4.87	22	20.37	26	13.68
1	48	58.53	64	59.25	112	58.94
2	28	34.14	22	20.37	50	26.31
3	2	2.43	-	-	2	1.05

	82		108		190	
Handicraft work						
2-3	2	2.43	-	-	2	1.05
4-5	20	24.39	26	24.07	46	24.21
6-7	15	18.29	44	40.74	59	31.05
8-9	26	31.70	20	18.51	46	24.21
10-11	19	23.17	16	14.81	35	18.42
12-13	-	-	2	1.85	2	1.05
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 17						
Leisure time Women artisans get						
Hours per day	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
0- ½	17	20.73	2	1.85	19	10.00
1-2	28	34.14	14	12.96	42	22.10
2-3	10	12.19	24	22.22	34	17.89
Any other	-	-	54	50.00	54	28.42
Nil	27	32.92	14	12.96	41	21.57
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 17.1						
How the female respondents spend their leisure time						
Ways of spending leisure time	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Visit friend	4	4.87	-	-	4	2.10
Go to market	10	12.19	4	3.70	14	7.36
Sleep or relax	41	50	22	20.37	63	33.15
Chat, watch TV etc.	-	-	66	61.11	66	34.73
Any other	-	-	2	1.85	2	1.05
N.R.	27	32.92	14	12.96	41	21.57
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 18						
How the women artisans manage their household responsibilities						
	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Alone	56	68.29	2	1.85	58	30.52
Sharing with relatives	18	21.95	26	24.07	44	23.15
Sharing with the husband	6	7.31	-	-	6	3.15
Render helping hand to family members	-	-	72	66.66	72	37.89
NR	2	2.43	8	7.40	10	5.26
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 18.1 Whether respondents feel over-burdened						
Over burdened	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Yes	62	75.60	44	40.47	106	55.78
No	20	24.39	62	57.40	82	43.15
Can't say	-	-	2	1.85	2	1.05
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 19 Care of female artisan's children while they are at work		
Care of children	Married	
	Number	%age
Self	70	85.36
Husband	4	4.87
Mother in law	6	7.31
NR	2	2.43
Total	82	

TABLE – 19.1		
Whether their children get neglected		
Children get neglected	Married	
	Number	%age
Yes	36	43.90
No	34	41.46
Can't say	12	14.63
	82	

TABLE – 20						
Female artisans go for outings						
No. of times	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Daily	7	8.53	6	5.55	13	6.84
Once in a week	20	24.39	40	37.03	60	31.57
Once in a month	13	15.85	30	27.77	43	22.63
Occasionally	26	31.70	4	3.70	30	15.78
Rarely	12	14.63	26	24.07	38	20.00
Never	4	4.87	2	1.85	6	3.15
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 21**Motivation for women artisans to be in the handicraft profession**

Motivation	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Gross necessity	8	9.75	8	7.40	16	8.42
To supplement family income & raise the economic status	54	65.85	45	41.66	99	52.10
To have an independent income	10	12.19	40	37.03	50	26.31
Engagement for spare time	4	4.87	7	6.48	11	5.78
To escape from domestic chores	-	-	-	-	-	-
To meet professional expenditure	6	7.31	8	7.40	14	7.36
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 22						
Respondents who want to change/give up their handicraft work						
Change job	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Yes	32	39.02	72	66.66	104	54.73
No	50	60.97	36	33.33	86	45.26
Can't Say	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	82	-	108	-	190	-
TABLE 22 A						
Reasons for change/give-up						
Lesser hours of work	-	-	10	9.25	10	5.26
If the family income increases by any other source	12	14.63	12	11.11	24	12.63
After the marriage if the income of the husband is satisfactory	-	-	17	15.74	17	8.94
After the marriage if husband/ in-laws object	-	-	9	8.33	9	4.73
Get a better job	20	24.39	24	22.22	44	23.15
NR	50	60.97	36	33.33	86	45.26
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 23						
Job satisfaction of the female artisans						
Satisfied with job	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Yes	82	100	60	55.55	142	74.73
No	-	-	32	29.62	32	16.84
Partially	-	-	16	14.81	16	8.42
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 24						
Participation of female artisans in family decision						
Take decisions in respect,daily expenditures, education of children, marriage of children, purchase of real estate etc.	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Yes	32	39.02	27	25.00	59	31.05
No	20	24.39	61	56.48	81	42.63
My consent is sought	30	36.58	20	18.51	50	26.31
	82		108		190	

III

ARTISAN WOMEN PERCEPTIONS & ASPIRATIONS

The times we pass through are epoc-making and revolutionary. New values, norms, Ideals as well as perceptions, aspirations and expectations inform and characterize our age. No age can readily get rid of its traditions, legacies and ideologies. Our age is no exception. However, values such as individual freedom, social justice and human equality constitute the ongoing spirit of our times. Gender freedom, gender equality and gender justice also emanate from this very spirit of the age. Women are getting conscious of their need for freedom, justice and equality. They are developing new perceptions, assumptions and aspirations; perception of their pasts and the present and the aspirations for their future. Women are inching along the road to freedom, justice and equality. Women's perceptions and aspirations are a function of the general human awareness about their circumstances. Multiple educational, cultural, socio-

political and intellectual factors have contributed to greater awareness of our legacies and ideologies. Women in general, participate in this awareness. Mass media in our times have shaped up our attitudes and orientations in a decisive way. Therefore, with the rising revolution of expectations women have also come-up to the demands of the times.

Women in Kashmir are by and large still committed to the traditional value system. However, with the ongoing processes of modernization and urbanization they too are experiencing a radical change in their perceptions and aspirations. They have started appreciating the significance of modern democratic and egalitarian values and want to participate in the new emerging social order. With a view to eliciting the responses of the female artisans of Srinagar we asked them various questions pertaining to gender discrimination, gender equality, job opportunities, aspirations vis-a-vis, their sons and daughters, their views on inheritance rights, *Mehar* etc. Their responses are outlined as here-under:

A1. Perception of female artisan:

With regard to Discrimination of women vis-a-vis men.

Majority of both married and unmarried artisan women stated that women are discriminated against men. 24.52% could not say anything in this regard. 15.02% said that no discrimination existed, between men and women (See Table 24.1). The respondents who mentioned that discrimination does exist between men and women gave a number of justifications in support of their argument. The crux of their justification is as follows:

“Men enjoy more liberty, they are free to do whatever they feel like, they do not need any ones consent. A women has no right to decision. Before marriage she is subservient to her father/brother and after marriage she is under the control of her husband and in laws. Girl child’s birth is not a welcome feature, because she is to be protected. She can not take up those jobs which a male can take and earn livelihood.” Some married artisan also said *“that men are free once they come back from their work, domestic chores never leave a woman. Men take the decisions and thrust them on women.”*

Their statements revealed that they were aware of the discrimination women is subjected to, but at the same time said that they could not help it. If they protest, it will result in havoc in their life.

A2. With regard to status of a women vis-a-vis Husband:

Younger generation have a more egalitarian outlook. This is manifested in the following responses. 76.85% of the unmarried artisan women said that, the men and women should enjoy equal status in the family and in the society. Only 23.15 % of them stated that husband should have higher status than wife both at home and outside. None of the respondents advocated a higher status for women vis-a-vis their men. However, among the married artisan women 60.97% stated that husband should have a higher status than his wife in the family as well in the society, only 34.14% respondents wished an equal status for both husband and wife, 2.43% of the married artisan women felt that wife should have a higher status than her husband in the family and outside (See. **Table 24.2** for details)

B1. Factors that help to get a better job

The female artisan women were asked about the factors that would have helped them to get a better job. Majority of them 63.15 mentioned being educated and the next response was technically qualified. A sizeable percentile 13.68% could not say anything in this regard (Table 25 for details)

B2. Job opportunities

The female artisan women while responding to whether there are more job opportunities available to men or women or both said that it depends on the efforts, education and technical excellence both of them possess. 45.12% of the married respondents and 54.62% of unmarried artisan women gave the above response. The next response that both married and unmarried respondents gave was that men have more opportunities to get a job. Regarding more job opportunities for women none of the married respondents favoured this, however, among unmarried respondents 7.40% said that there were more job opportunities for women as they could take up any type of job (See Table as 26.1 for details).

Further the women artisans were asked about the jobs that are easier to get for a woman with the same educational and technical qualifications as that of the respondents under study (Table 26.2). Majority of them 69.47% stated that what else could they do, the most dignified job they could do was the handicraft work that they were doing. This work they could easily do within their homes, without roaming around and searching from door to door. However, a considerable percentage of women artisans 24.21% were unable to say anything in this regard.

C1. Aspirations of female artisans vis-a-vis son/daughter:

The artisan women were asked whether they would like their sons or daughters to do the same job i.e. handicraft work. Though majority of both married and unmarried artisan women said that they did not want their son/daughters to continue the same, yet a slight difference was observed between the responses of married and unmarried respondents.

Among the married artisan women 85.36% said and “No”, 7.31% said that they want their daughters “not the sons” to be in the same profession. This percentile is of those married women artisans whose daughters were already working in handicraft sector. Among the unmarried artisan women 94.44% vehemently opposed their son/daughter to be in the same profession. Their “No” always came in a louder voice.

The woman artisans who said that they did not want their son/daughter to be in the same profession i.e. handicraft work, were asked to state what did they expect their son/daughter to do in their life. The responses of both married/unmarried artisan women were more or less the same. Majority of them said that their children should get education, then it was their luck or God’s will. Others who expected their daughter/son to become doctor, engineer, some other government job or business also gave tremendous preference to education. This means that attitudes of all women particularly married illiterate women have changed with regard to education. While expressing the importance of education, these women

talked about the problems which they were facing without education in day to day life. For example they could not help their children in their studies, could not read or remember the names of medicines, keep the records, preserve important documents etc. So their children should get education so that they do not face the problems which their illiterate parents were facing. **Table 27.1 and 27.2** give a description of the expectations of the artisan women with regard to their son/daughter.

D1. Female artisans views with regard to their property share/*Mehar* etc.

To know the attitude of artisan with regard to the rights of a Muslim woman vis-a-vis her property rights, they were first asked questions about their awareness with respect to their inheritance. All of them were not only aware about their property share but knew as to how much share Islamic law gives to them. Though Islamic Jurisprudence gives 1/3 share to a woman in comparison to her brother, in Kashmiri Muslim society customary law is predominantly prevalent. The customary law does not prohibit but also does not approve of a woman taking

share from her parental property. This is supported by the fact that majority of the married artisan women 84.14% have not taken their share in parental property. 15.85% have got the share, but they are mostly widows, divorcees or those who were in dire need of it.

These 84.14% when asked as to why they have not taken their share, 70% of them mentioned that they did not want to have strained relations with brothers. Historically, the property share to their daughters/sisters by most of the families is either not given or given reluctantly. Therefore, if a woman asks for a property share, she is always afraid of straining her relations with her brothers/sister in laws, if not with her parents. 20% said that property was still undivided and they did not want to claim it and another 10% said that their husband's property was enough for their family.

Regarding *Mehar*, which a Muslim woman gets at the time of marriage, its payment is again customary. Majority of married artisan women 73.17% had not been paid their *Mehar* by their respective husbands. When these 73.17% were asked as to why they did not get *Mehar*,

majority of them 80% said that “they do not want a divorce” This gives us an understanding that these women were ignorant about the payment of *Mehar* and believed that the dower money is to be given only in case of divorce. However, the Islamic law clearly says that *Mehar* is to be given to a woman by her husband at the time of marriage. If he can not afford, with the permission of his wife he can pay it later. But he has to pay *Mehar* during his life time. Some artisan women mentioned that their husbands could not afford the dower money at this stage. Only 21.95% women have got their *Mehar* money (see **Table 28** for reference).

The questions of inheritance rights and *Mehar* were also discussed with the un-married artisan women. With regard to property rights 50% of the artisan women’s views were similar to those of married artisan’s as they also wanted to go by customary law which is prevalent in the society. Another 50% however, said that women should claim their share even if it means straining relations with brothers. They further said that once all the women keep claiming their share, a time will come when the brothers will willingly give them their share of the property. Regarding *Mehar*, they stated that it should be given at the time of marriage itself even if the amount is small.

The above analysis pertaining to the perceptions and aspirations of the female artisans of Srinagar yielded the following responses:

With regard to gender discrimination, 61.05 % women artisans confirmed that gender discrimination does exist within home and society, and the rest of the respondents either denied this fact or did not say any thing in this regard. It seemed that they had internalized the traditional values too strongly to give any positive or negative response. The perceptions and aspirations of the unmarried artisans were more egalitarian than married artisan women as majority of them advocated that husband and wife should have an equal status within the family.

Significant change was not found in the perceptions of married and unmarried artisan women with regard to the factors that could have fetched them a better job and also regarding the job opportunities available to men and women. Further, majority of the respondents favoured handicraft sector to be the best that could have happened to them within the four walls of their home, but at the same time none of them wanted their son or daughter to follow their profession except a small percentage of 7.31 percent married artisan women. Most of them wished their children to be highly educated leaving their final placement to be decided by fate/God.

Furthermore, contrary to the hypothesis, the female artisans were aware about their rights, but most of them preferred to go by customary law.

References

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- ¹ Krishna, Raj , Maithreyi "Why Women's Studies: Some Ferments Perspective," In Maithreyi Krishna Raj (ed.), *Women's Studies: Feminist Perspectives*, Popular Prakashan Bombay, 1986.
 - ² Mthur, P.K., "*Inequality in the Status of Women and Minority Identity in India*", *Muslim Women in India*, Mohini Anjum, (ed.) Radiant Publishers, Delhi 1992.
 - ³ The Mughal gardens fall within the periphery of Srinagar city.
 - ⁴ Baba Rishi is a shrine of a famous Muslim Saint. It is very close to world famous Gulmarg and Ash Muqam is the shrine of Syed Zain-u-din Shah close to another famous tourist resort Pahalgam.

TABLE – 24.1						
Respondents opinion about the discrimination of women vis-a-vis man						
Woman discriminated against man	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Yes	46	56.09	70	64.81	116	61.05
No	14	17.07	14	12.96	28	14.73
Can't say	22	26.82	24	22.22	46	24.21
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 24.2						
Respondents opinion on wife's status vis-a-vis her husband						
Do you think	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Wife should have higher status than her husband	2	2.43	-	-	2	1.05
Husband should have higher status than wife	52	63.14	25	23.15	77	40.52
There should be equal status for both husband and wife	28	34.14	83	76.85	111	58.42
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 25						
Factors helped to get a better job	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Being educated	54	65.85	66	61.11	120	63.15
Being technically qualified	20	24.39	24	22.22	44	23.15
NR	8	9.75	18	16.66	26	13.68
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 26.1						
Job opportunities						
Job opportunities for	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Men	35	42.68	35	32.40	70	36.84
Women	-	-	8	7.40	8	4.21
Both	37	45.12	59	54.62	96	50.52
NR	10	12.19	6	5.55	16	8.42
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 26.2						
Jobs easy to get for a woman of respondents qualification						
Jobs easy	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Same	56	68.29	76	70.37	132	69.47
Can't say	4	4.87	8	7.40	12	6.31
No response	22	26.82	24	22.22	46	24.21
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 27.1						
Expectations of female artisans with regard to son's/daughter's profession						
Expect their son/daughter to do the handi work	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Yes	6	7.31	-	-	6	3.15
No	70	85.36	102	94.44	172	90.52
Can't say	2	2.43	6	5.55	8	4.21
NR	4	4.87	-	-	4	2.10
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 27.2						
Female artisan's expectations with regard to jobs their son/daughter should do						
Their son/daughter should do	Married		Unmarried		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Get education	60	73.17	81	75.00	141	74.21
Business	4	4.87	12	11.11	16	8.42
Doctor	2	2.43	4	3.70	6	3.15
Engineer	-	-	5	4.62	5	2.63
Govt. job	4	4.87	-	-	4	2.10
Same	2	2.43	-	-	2	1.05
NR	10	12.19	6	5.55	16	8.42
	82		108		190	

TABLE – 28		
Whether married artisan women got share in parental share and <i>Mahr</i>		
	Married	
	Number	%age
Yes	13	15.85
No	69	84.14
NR	-	-
	82	-

Qualitative Data

CASE STUDIES

Introduction

After presenting the analysis and interpretation of the quantitative data, it will be useful to present some case studies of some of the artisan women, who are the real producers of the handicraft items. These case studies will help us in getting a better understanding of the role women play in handicraft industry and make the invisibility phenomenon of women's work more visible. They will also give us a glimpse of their life, their problems, their aspirations, their dreams, and their prospects and above all their contribution to their family in particular and handicraft industry in general. This section also includes a brief about the workers, the middlemen and the trade.

The case studies have been broadly categorized into:

- a) Case studies of married artisan women, and
- b) Case studies of unmarried artisan women

Case Studies of Married Artisan Women

Case No. 1

Aisha was a fifty-year-old widow, who lost her husband some five years back. Her husband was a mason by

profession and used to earn Rs. 1500-2000 per month. She herself used to spin *pashmina* and earn Rs. 500 per month to supplement family income. Though her income was not much, yet together they were able to raise their family nicely. After the death of her husband she was left alone and poorer. She found it very difficult to run the family of seven members including her five beautiful daughters and a 10 year old cute son. Therefore, to supplement their family income, her daughters started *crewel* work.

One of the daughters was married last year. The family was run on the meager income of **Aisha** and her three daughters. One of the daughters who was twenty year old earned Rs 1500 a month due to her hard work and skill. Since she had to sit at one place for more than 10 hours a day working on *crewel* she had developed some problem in her legs and knees. The other two younger daughters earned about Rs.300 each a month. The youngest daughter and the son used to go to school.

Aisha herself continued to spin *Pashmina* and earned Rs 500 a month besides doing all the household work. It sounds strange that over a period of five years **Aisha's** income had not gone beyond Rs. 500 a month. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the wages of handicraft workers

especially the spinners have not been revised and secondly due to the death of her husband, her health deteriorated and she was not able to spin much.

Before marriage Aisha never did any handicraft work. Since the income of her husband was meager, she learnt this craft, from one of her friends, immediately after her marriage. Even today inspite of her ill health she worked for almost 12 hours a day including six hours on handicraft work. She cooked food for the family herself. However, her daughters provided her helping hand in other domestic activities. When her daughters took a brief nap after the lunch, she used to go to the nearby market to buy vegetables and other household items. She hardly found any time to visit her relations and socialize with the other women in the neighborhood.

She was conscious of the exploitation of artisan women, but said with a heavy heart, "it is a helpless situation and no one can help it". She felt that the wages given to her as well as to her daughters were very low and wanted that the wages should be enhanced considering the amount of hard labour they had to put in. She was highly critical of the big dealers and brokers who according to her were making huge profits by exploiting the poor workers and

eating the fruit of their hard labour. She wanted the intervention of the government in this regard so that the real and genuine workers were benefited. This she felt would not only help them to become financially sound but would motivate more and more people to learn and practice handicraft work and will go a long way in helping the handicraft industry of the valley.

She regretted she could not send all her daughters to school because of poverty. Education of her two youngest children was now her only dream and hope for the future. She felt there was no difference between a son and a daughter. However, while as the sons could go anywhere any time and do all type of odd jobs, the daughters could not be given that freedom. Her son was a safeguard to her daughters; if somehow they were not happy at their in-laws they could always return to their brother at least for the shelter. Unmindful of the fact that Muslim women get one third of the parental property, she still considered her son's house a shelter for her daughters during turbulent times.

After the death of her husband, Aisha's brothers gave her due share from the parental property. With that money she renovated her husbands house. After taking a long breath, Aisha said that women were born for troubles only.

They had to do all types of household activities and at the same time earn to run the family. Still there was no recognition of their contribution. Her last wish was to marry her daughters in some economically viable families and also to see her younger children attain higher education.

Case No. 2

Eighty year old, **Khateeja** was quite dejected with life and said that life had given her nothing but tears. She was just 10 years old when she learnt *Pashmina* spinning from her mother and till date she continued to do so. She was the only child of her parents and therefore her husband came to stay at her parent's place after the marriage. She still lived in the same house, which was now in a dilapidated condition.

Her husband was a carpenter. His income was not enough. Therefore, **Khateeja** used to work on wheel to add to the family income. **Khateeja** was a gifted artisan. She mastered the art of spinning and used to spin fine and very thin thread from *pashmina* wool. "The thinner you spin the more you earn", said **Khateeja**. "I used to buy *Pashmina* wool for 2 Annas (12.5 Paisa) and it would fetch me a good amount. These days that quality *Pashmina* is not available. This time If I get 5 gm. *Pashmina* wool for about Rs.30, I

will earn a profit of only Rs.50". It took her one complete week to spin 5 gm. *Pashmina* wool and earns around Rs. 400 per month. She spun 4 hours a day and said " I cannot spin much due to my old age, my arms start paining if I spin much." Rest of the time she reposed and occasionally visited the nearby market or went to see her childhood friend who lived adjacent to her house. Her husband now did not earn anything. He was injured in a firing incident some years back. **Khateeja** had just one son who is now 50 year old. He was a menial govt. employee and earned about four thousand rupees a month. With that money he had to support the family of eight members including his wife, 3 daughters and a son. All of his children used to go to school. Though **Khateeja** and her husband stayed with their son, she bore all her expenditure on account of medicines, clothes, etc. She also bore the personal expenditure of her husband and occasionally contributed towards family.

This time **Khateeja** was suffering from heart trouble. Even at this old age she had to work to live. Therefore she was not very happy with her son. She believed that the wages paid to her were very low given the fineness of her work, the skills she possessed and the hard labour she put in. Even though the dealer to whom she sold her *pashmina*

thread admired her skill, he did not always pay her well in time. At times she had to go to the dealer (middleman) not less than ten times to get her own money. "Middlemen in this trade are the biggest exploiters", she said with a long breath.

With tears in her eyes in a highly emotional and charged tone she said, "the daughters are important for mothers in the sense that mothers can share all their problems with them and they are more sympathetic and useful especially in old age than a son." Remembering her childhood she smilingly referred to that period as more liberal and said, "there was freedom and all the girls and boys used to play together without any inhibitions or problems -something you cannot think of today. The times have changed. Today you can not afford to allow your daughter to play with boys. A 10 year old child today is more mature than a 30 year old man of that time". For this she blamed television and cinema, which she felt have induced all the filthy ideas in the young minds.

Regarding the husband-wife relation, she was quite contended and said she enjoyed equality. However she felt that "a husband should have more respect for his wife even if he is the sole breadwinner. If he has respect for his wife

then only will she command respect in the family". She further said that women should try to be self-sufficient and self-reliant. Spinning made her economically independent, so she continued to spin and cherish her work even now.

Case NO: 3

Farhat was a 25 year old. Married just a year before, she had studied up to 9th standard. Her husband was a businessman with an educational background of 12th standard. She had no idea about the total earning of her husband, but could give a rough estimate of the total income of the husband's family. Keeping in view the living standard of that family, their income may be around Rs. 40,000 per month. There were four male earning members at her in-laws and all were involved in a joint business. Women were not involved in any economic activity other than household chores. Her in-laws family was a joint family with a total strength of 11 people. Her mother-in-law was the head of the family who was a strong woman and controlled the finances of the family. In all matters her decision was final. Her sons including **Farhat's** husband could not take any independent decision vis-a-vis their wives or children.

She stayed at her in-laws place only for two and a half months. Afterwards she conceived and was suffering from

initial pregnancy related problems. She was asked by her mother- in- law to go to her parent's place for recovery and thereafter no one from her in- laws place, including her husband, visited her. She was with her parents for the last nine months. Recently she gave birth to a female baby. Still her in-laws had not visited her. She felt that her in-laws could have probably visited her had she given birth to a male baby. She further said that her pregnancy related problem was simply a pretext. Basically her mother- in- law was asking for her gold ornaments which were gifted to her at the time of her marriage from both the sides. She had refused to give them away. She wanted to assert for her rights, but was paying very heavily for it. She was confident she would win. She did not want to bow. She said that, if she bowed once then throughout her life she would have to make compromises. Her rights were inviolate. She would not allow anyone to violate them.

Her father was running a small business, earning Rs. 5000 per month and supporting the family of four persons. Though he was not affluent, he was leading a modest life. Her younger brother was doing his graduation. She was doing embroidery work also known as *jalakdozi* in local dialect on *Crewel*. She earn Rs. four to five hundred per

month. She worked for five hours a day at this job besides helping her mother in domestic chores. She was slightly less burdened with the domestic chores as her mother took the full responsibility of the house. She did handicraft work, just to earn for her own expenditures and did not want to be totally dependent on her father for every petty need. However, before marriage she used to earn only to save for dowry.

She learnt *crewel* work from her aunt during her school days. She wanted to give up this craft once she went back to her in-laws, as her husband's income was reasonably good. However, if circumstances forced her to continue the handicraft work, she would do it with more dedication and vigor. She wanted to do something for the upliftment of the artisan women. She wanted to make a union or a co-operative sort of a thing through which the wages of the artisans could be enhanced and regulated so that the exploitation is minimized. She further said, that Kashmiri handicraft industry was dependent mostly on women because the wages were low and women did it as a part-time job. Men on the other hand could not work on such low wages. They could not afford to be part-time workers.

CASE NO. 4

Tahira was a young and beautiful woman. She was a divorcee and approximately thirty years of age. She never had the opportunity of going to the school, but could read and write Urdu and Kashmiri. She got married at the age of twenty three and was divorced three years later. She had a five year old son. At the time of her divorce her son was just eight months old.

Her husband was used to weave carpets and was also owner of some carpet looms. She was not knowing his exact income, but said his income must have been reasonably good. It was she who initiated divorce. She said, "I love cleanness, I used to keep my home, surroundings, clothes and everything clean but my in-laws had no concept of hygiene. Their language was also unrefined. I felt suffocated in that atmosphere. I tried my level best to keep the home clean, but no one was co-operating. My husband too was uncultured and had no manners. I felt ashamed when he talked non-sense in every body's presence. Then I requested my mother to help me in getting a divorce". As per the Islamic jurisprudence, a Muslim woman is entitled to *Mahr* (Dower money) at the time of her marriage. Her husband

didn't pay it to her. She, therefore, claimed the custody of her son for that.

Tahira was doing embroidery on *crewel*. She learnt this craft during her childhood from a craft master in their neighborhood. She was paid on "piece rate basis". She did embroidery on small pieces of crewel, which were latter used for making handbags. She got Rs.13 per bag for embroidery work. She finished two and a half bags per day, thus, earning around Rs.1000 a month. Before her marriage she used to do this work to earn for her own expenses and dowry, but now she earned to bring up her son. Right from her divorce **Tahira** was staying with her elder sister's family. Her brother- in- law was running a small business and earning about Rs. 15000 per month. **Tahira** said that her brother- in- law was generous and affectionate. He treated her well. He also loved his family. He willingly provided her space under his roof. He never made her to feel that his house did not belong to her. Her own father was quite old now and owned a small house in which three of her brothers lived together. She did not want to disturb the privacy of her brothers.

Though her brother- in- law took care of her food, shelter and clothes, she spent her earnings on her son's

school fee, books, uniform and a little bit on herself. Every day she worked almost nine hours on handicraft work.

Though she was not solely responsible for domestic chores, she provided constant help to her sister in everything. Whenever she found time she loved to chat with other fellow women. She could not make any comment regarding the wages given to her. She said, "I am satisfied and happy that at least I know crewel work, how can an illiterate woman like me otherwise earn livelihood in a dignified way"? She further said that her husband never gave her a single penny. Whenever she asked for it he used to avoid by saying..."what for do you need the money, you are provided food and shelter in the family. As if beyond that there was no need." Then she used to do *crewel* work and earn to fulfill her needs. **Tahira** strongly advocated that women should try to learn some skill so that they could earn to become economically independent.

Case No 5

Zoona was a literate lady. She was old but a stout lady of 75 years of age. She had studied up to 9th standard. She was married for the last 55 years and was leading a quite happy married life. Her husband had done matriculation and was working with some private

organization. She was not quite happy with her husbands achievements as she said "he was always lethargic, though he was a matriculate of his times, he could not find a suitable job for himself". However, with a big laughter she said, "He loved me a lot, he was mad in my love. I was the most important person in his life. He never does any thing that hurts me. My decision in the family are absolute and my husband follows it with happiness even at this stage. He always used to give me more respect and I commanded higher status in the family because of his affectionate and loveable attitude."

Zoona exclaimed with joy that her parents were quite broad-minded. Her father had passed 8th standard and was in govt. service seventy years back. She was the only daughter of her parents along with two younger brothers. Her brothers attained higher education and later on became officers in the state government. She was also appointed as a govt. school teacher after passing her 6th standard examination, but was not allowed to join by her prospective husband as well as in-laws. They were too conservative vis-à-vis women's education .

She had three daughters and a son. All her daughters did post-graduation and were in government service as

school teachers. They were happily married in educated and economically well off families. She was dissatisfied with her son who didn't study much and managed to pass only 12th standard. He was a shopkeeper and earned Rs.4000 per month. He was yet to get married and was about 30 years of age. Her husband was too old and did not earn anything now. She lived in her father's house along with her son and husband. The house was now in a shabby condition and without any proper ventilation.

When **Zoona** gave birth to three daughters and a son her husband's income was quite moderate but still she was able to feed them nicely with that income. One question that constantly disturbed her was how the children could get proper education and what would be their future? She used to spend long hours in pondering over this issue, till one day she decided to learn some craft so that she could supplement the family income. "That is when I learnt spinning *pashmina* wool from my neighbour". Since **Zoona** was active and intelligent therefore she learnt the art quickly. She used to spin very fine threads, which would always fetch her more money. She said "thinner you spin, more threads you can take out of *pashmina* wool. So naturally if the threads are

spun thinner it will fetch more money as the middleman counts the number of threads and pays money accordingly".

Her mother also used to spin *pashmina*, but never taught her as she wanted her to attain education and become a school teacher. Her mother's dream remained unfulfilled. When **Zoona** learnt spinning, her mother was too old to spin. Therefore she gifted **Zoona** her own spinning wheel. **Zoona** still spins with the same wheel and had a very high reverence for it. She treated it not only as a wheel that fetch her some money, but a token of love and a gift from her mother. **Zoona** wish her younger daughter to take the wheel after her death, but her daughter was reluctant as she did not want to spin the wheel.

After learning the art of spinning *pashmina* wool she used to work hard and earn some money. She would spend all her earnings on her children's education, clothes, health etc. With her husbands income she used to manage the household. She managed all the household responsibilities alone. Though she used to feel exhausted at the end of the day, she would never neglect her children. She was happy that all her daughters at least did post-graduation. She said that her children's education was paramount, rest of the things were secondary.

This time **Zoona** earned Rs.600 per month. She spent this money on medicines, her clothes and also on the clothes of her husband. She also bought chocolates, chips and other things for her grand children. Even at this age, she looked quite energetic and enthusiastic. She said that when she get money after spinning she was extremely happy and satisfied. She still cooked food, washed utensils, and cleaned the house herself. However her son occasionally rendered some help. She worked for around 12 hours a day and spends five hours on spinning. She got up at five in the morning and went to bed at eleven in the night. She was also fond of watching television. '*Kaun Banega Crore Pati*', a popular programme on star television network was her favourite program these days. She also did knitting but only when she did not feel like spinning. She proudly said, "earlier girl child was discriminated but now the things have changed and the discrimination against the girl child has diminished to a great extent". Narrating her own story she said, "though I used to take firm decisions, and commanded respect but still my husband enjoyed the superior status".

Zoona loved spinning and wanted to do so till death. She did not want to be dependent on her son as she said that her son's income was not much and he had to save for his

children. She further said that the wages given to the spinners are very low and should be increased. Her last wish was that her son could get a government job and could construct his own beautiful house.

Case studies of unmarried women

Case No 6.

Tawheeda was unmarried and around 27 years old. She was of average looks and height. She was totally uneducated. Her parents too were illiterate. Her father was 55 years of age and was a labourer. He did not earn anything as he was suffering from some stomach ailment. Her mother was around 50 years old and she too was not keeping a good health. She lived in a nuclear family. Her two younger brothers had done graduation in science and both were still unemployed. In a family of six, **Tawheeda** and her younger sister were the only two bread winning members.

She worked on *Namdha*. She did embroidery work on woolen yarn. She was paid Rs 43 per *Namdha* of the size of 5ft.x5ft. She finished one and a half *Namdha* per day and some times even two. Therefore her monthly income was around Rs1800 to Rs2000. Her younger sister too was an artisan & was involved in the same craft. Her sister finished sometime one *Namdha* per day or at times one & a half

depending on the availability of time. She too earned about Rs 1500 per month. With a total amount of Rs. 3500, they managed the household. Every day **Tawheeda** & her sister spent around 10 hours on handcraft work. Since **Tawheeda** worked faster than her sister therefore she earned more than her sister.

Both the sisters worked 18 hours a day including the work they spent on household chores and handicrafts. They usually got up at 6 AM and worked till 11 PM. The whole family was economically dependent on the earnings of the two sisters. They worked very hard for the family and hardly found any leisure time. They finished the household work together. If **Tawheeda** cooked the food, the other sister cleaned the house in the mean time. In late evenings **Tawheeda** made the balls out of the yarn with which she had to do embroidery next day. She hardly went to market, but being the eldest offspring of her sick parents, she managed to go for social calls when it was necessary. Though she loved her craft, but wanted to change it if she got something better which would fetch her more money. She said that the wages she was getting were quit low, notwithstanding the fact that the embroidery work had an adverse effect on the eyes and health of an artisan. She further said, "my left

thumb and index finger start bleeding when I work for longer hours as the hook with which I work constantly pricks them. Then at night before going to bed I apply some *Henna* on the injuries so that I can work the next day. At times it does not get healed up as the pricks are severe. I have to stop the work for days together resulting in the curtailment of my earnings. I cannot afford to stop the work as the money is badly required by the family."

Both **Tawheeda** and her sister gave all their earnings to their mother who was the head of the family. **Tawheeda** loved her parents and wanted to do something for them. She told, "had she been educated, she could have done better". She wanted to start a production unit of her own, but had neither the money nor the sufficient understanding of such business due to her illiteracy. When asked about the discrimination between men and women she was not able to say anything. She only know that her family required her help. However, she said that both man and woman are equal and both of them can be economically independent if they have the determination and will to do so. Though both of her brothers were unemployed, she had no regrets but felt for their future. She said that both of them had done graduation and unless they found a suitable government job, they could

not do anything. "It is none of their fault, as there are very few jobs available in Kashmir for educated youth", said **Tawheeda**.

She was not very keen about her rights and said that she will not take any share in her parental property nor would she claim any *mehr* from her husband. She would be marrying to stay with him for all her life and never wished to break it. So why at all should she claim it. This explains the ignorance or rather innocence of **Tawheeda** about *Mehr*.

Case No 7

Gulshan the resident of down town area of Srinagar was quite beautiful with pink and white complexion. She was 19 years of age and was unmarried. She discontinued her studies when she was in her 5th standard. Her mother said, "when arms struggle for freedom started in the valley way back in 1990 **Gulshan** was in fifth class. One day she got stuck in the school till evening due to heavy exchange of fire between militants and the security forces. When she came home she was looking quite frightened and from next day she refused to go to school. Despite our constant motivation she couldn't overcome her fear. This was how her school days were over". She was now mature enough and felt bad about the fear that resulted in her dropping out from

the school. This time she wanted like to continue her studies, but now the time had gone, as it waited for none.

She lived in a nuclear family consisting of her parents, two brothers and one sister. Her father was a tailor and earned about Rs. 2000 a month. **Gulshan** worked on *Crewel*. She did embroidery in thick woolen yarn on hand woven cloth by a pointed hook. She earned around Rs. 800 a month. Her sister also did the crewel embroidery. **Gulshan** had learnt this art from her mother. Her mother was an expert in this work and also earned around Rs 2000 per month. The dealer from whom they got work provided them the cloth and two or three kg's of yarn. For every kg she was paid Rs 425. She finished two kg's of yarn per month. She spent around 6 to 7 hours on handicraft work and also share the domestic work with her sister and mother, as her mother spent around 10 hours a day on handicraft work. Her mother had some backache problem, so she rendered very little help to her in the household chores. Inspite of being so busy, she found some time in the evening to relax and watch TV.

Gulshan's family owned a newly constructed small but a good house. Since the total income of her parents was around 4000/- **Gulshan** earned for her own expenditure and also contributed a part of it towards the family. Her elder

brother had done graduation in science stream, three years back and was still unemployed. She said, " for the whole day my brother relaxes in the room and watches TV in between he takes meals and tea and has nothing to do". She felt quite unhappy with her brother and said, "why cannot he also do something and earn like I do. Our parents discriminate between us. They do not say anything to my brother and in turn ask me and my younger sister to earn."

Mother always said that it was difficult to run the family on a meager amount of Rs. 4000. She always prayed for our brothers settlement. The younger sister who passed her matriculation last year also worked on crewel during her free time and earned around Rs. 200 per month for her own self. **Gulshan** said that the only motivation behind her work was to be economically independent and be no more a burden on her parents. She did not want to give up her handicraft work unless she got something better.

When asked to give her opinion about the discrimination of women in the family vis-à-vis men, she said, "a woman can not take any decision of her own, while a man can always do so. Firstly in her parent's house she is subservient to her parents or brother, then after marriage she is subservient to her husband or in-laws and after the death

of her husband she was under the control of her son. Male approval is always a must in one way or the other". Though she was quite happy with her *crewel* work, she did not want her children to do so. Regarding her rights she firmly said, "if my parents will not give me my property share, which is due to me as per Islamic law, I will claim it. This time it is me who maintain the house from cleaning, cooking, washing to everything. How can I be deprived of my rights. Daughters make the house and sons take the advantage". Regarding *Mehr* she said that she will claim it right at the time of her marriage.

Case No.8

Tanveera was unmarried with medium height and attractive features. She was 23 years of age. She was totally uneducated and cannot read or write. Her dead parents were also illiterate. She lost her father when she was just four years of age and her elder brother was 12 years. They were brought up by the mother who used to spin *pashmina* wool. Her maternal uncle also was rendering some financial help. Her elder brother started doing business with his maternal Uncle. They were brought up in absolute poverty. Some five years back she lost her mother also.

Tanveera was the only sister of her three brothers. She was the youngest among the siblings and her elder brother was the head of the family. Her brother was running a small business of carpet and was earning about Rs. 4000 per month. The other two brothers were working as salesmen and earned Rs 1500 each per month. Since they lost their parents, so none of the brothers had the opportunity of going to school. In a family of just four members, **Tanveera** used to feel bored after all her brothers left for work. So she decided to learn some craft as an engagement for her spare time. She learnt embroidery on shawls with hook from her friend who was her next door neighbour also.

She got up at 6 in the morning. After bath she offered prayers and then prepared tea / breakfast for the family. Simultaneously she cooked meals for both the times as well as washed clothes and utensils and cleaned the house. She finishes her house hold activities by 11 AM. After that she works on shawls till her brothers returned from work. In between she took lunch break for half an hour. In the evening she quickly made tea for the family as well as evening meals and again started working on *shawls*. After dinner she washed utensils, cleaned the kitchen and ironed the clothes. Her brothers did not render any help in domestic

chores. While she was at work on *shawls* she used to catch glimpses of TV and listen to music. **Tanveera** said, "though working on shawls over burden me but I have no option. What will I do during my spare time. There is no one in the family with whom I can interact during daytime. My brothers don't allow me to visit the neighbors nor do I feel like".

Every day she worked for more than 17 hours and she spent not less than 10 hours per day on handicraft work. She earned 1500 to 2000 per month and saved all the money. She was the in charge of all the finances earned by her brothers but did not spent anything herself. She acted like a treasurer only and kept the record of all the incomes and the expenditures. She never went to market herself, her elder brother did all the shopping and buy/bring whatever was required at home. He even got her work from the craft master and kept the record of her earnings and the materials brought from and returned to the craft master. The craft master paid her on "piece rate basis", depending on the amount of work a shawl contained. She was satisfied with what ever she earned and was unmindful about the exploitation by her master craftsman as she felt that the craft master also had to earn his share from the work.

At present she saved all her earnings and planned to spent this money at the time of her marriage for buying clothes and dowry items. After the marriage she would have no hesitation in giving up this job as she believed that she would be subservient to her husband and the in laws. So it would be they who would decide her course of action. While at present she was fully under the control of her brother she was ready to give herself under the control of her husband and in laws after the marriage. Therefore she in a way had internalized the patriarchal social structure which legitimizes the male dominance.

She was not able to say whether she enjoyed equality vis-à-vis her brothers or not, but said it clearly that, "though it is difficult to say whether a girl child is or is not discriminated in comparison to a male child but parents do not believe and trust their daughters the way they believe and trust their sons."

"In family a women has no right to decision. Her opinion is always considered as a stupid remark," said **Tanveera**. Regarding husband wife relationship, she said, "husband should be a step ahead as he has to earn for the family. It is not the responsibility of a woman to earn".

Though **Tanveera** was happy and satisfied with her profession, she did not want her daughter or son to do the same. Her dream was that her husband should be a rich man, should have many cars, should be able to give her a lot of jewelry and fill her life with all the riches and happiness.

Case No 9

Rafiq was unmarried and about 40 years of age with pale and sickly complexion and looked haggard. She was a heart patient right from her childhood and had a family history of heart ailments. Her eldest brother died due to heart attack; second eldest brother and sister were also suffering from heart trouble. The parents of **Rafiq** died some 15 years back. She was the youngest of all her siblings. She lived with her youngest brother who was doing small scale timber business and earned about Rs. 5000 a month. With this money he managed a family of 7 including his wife, four children and sister **Rafiq**.

Since her father was a very poor man, with a small income to feed a huge family, **Rafiq** could not be sent to school. Her elder brother, who was now no more, had the opportunity of going to school as he was the first child in a joint family. Her sister in law was the head of the family and nothing could be done without her consent. Even her brother

shivered in her presence. Her sister in law was annoyed with her as she did not help much in domestic chores. **Rafiqa** said that her sister in law did not realize her health conditions. Her brother's family did not treat her well and considered her a big burden. She was always taunted and abused by her sister in law.

After the death of her parents she learnt the art of *chain stitching* to meet some of her requirements. Her brother was the only earning member of the family and had to feed a large family of 7. She was fed up with her life, as she felt suffocated in the given atmosphere of the family. For her all the relations were meaningless and she had no love or respect left for any of her relations. "Best relation", she said with tears rolling down her cheeks, "is the one that cares and shows concern".

She wished had her income been sufficient she would have loved to live on her own, without bothering her brother or sister in law. Even at present her brother provided her only food and shelter and she managed to meet all her expenditure on medicines, clothes etc. The financial constraints together with her heart problem induced lot of tension in her mind. This was precisely the reason why she learnt the art of chain stitching.

In this art the embroidery work is done all over with a hook on hand woven cloth therefore the wages are also higher than the crewel work. For a medium size cushion cover she got paid up to Rs 62 per piece. However, the embroidery work has to be very thick and even a centimeter of cloth is not to be left un-embroidered. Her work was neat and clean and could earn a lot of money. However, for that she would have to work regularly and continuously. Only her physical ailment deterred her from working more and earning more. She hardly spent three hours a day on embroidery work and earned about 25 to 30 rupees. Though she wished to work more but exertion due to more work was too dangerous for her. Since she had been advised by the doctor to take complete rest she spent remaining time taking rest. She also washed her own clothes, helped in light domestic work and occasionally visited the local market to buy some house-hold items for herself.

She wanted to give it up as working for even three hours on "chain stitch rug" overburdened her and she often got pain in her neck and shoulders. But she could not afford to do so as she said, " I have to pull my life till death is granted to me and I have to continue the work to earn for my medicines to live this painful life".

She was thankful to Almighty for bestowing her the skill of embroidery. She said that it made her economically independent to a great extent and also made her sustenance possible if not easy. She strongly advocated that the parents should make both their daughters and sons properly educated and economically independent so that they could live on their own and will not fight on trivial issues. Regarding the rights of inheritance she said, "parents should distribute it equally among their children during their life time. They should not keep things undecided. If they fail to do so in their life time it becomes a major problem for their daughters after their death".

When asked why women did not start their own production units she said, "it involves a good investment, and a lot of leg work to find the artisan women and then to find the proper market for the goods. Since women always remain busy with the domestic work and children, they hardly can find time to do all this. However if a woman has enough money and time she can also compete with the men equally".

Case No. 10

Foziya was unmarried and 17 years old. She was of a good height, with beautiful eyes and innocent looks. She

was very intelligent and loved to wear good clothes. She was a middle pass (8th class) and had to discontinue her studies due to family crisis – her mothers separation from her father. Her father was a tailor by profession and earned around three thousand rupees a month. Her mother was around 45 years of age and separated from her husband some 8 years back. **Foziya's** father was a scoundrel and never cared for his wife and daughters. He was a gambler and used to finish all his earnings on gambling. **Foziya's** mother was used to be strongly against his gambling and other malpractices. She would try again and again to motivate her husband to keep away from such activities. The motivation usually used to lead first to a heated exchange and then to a serious fighting. In the end her mother would often get a heavy beating from her father.

He was often scolded by his mother (**Foziya's** grandmother), but he did not pay any heed to anyone's advice or remonstrance. She later on died due to this shock. After the death of his mother **Foziya's** father disposed off the house and ran to some unknown place. Her mother was forced to leave that house and she moved to her parental house along with her five daughters. There she started earning her livelihood by working on shawls and sent all her

daughters to school. **Foziya's** maternal grand father was also rendering some help. After one year her father appeared and asked her mother to come again to stay with him which she refused. Then one day some three years back he kidnapped three of **Foziya's** sisters from school, and they still continued to live with him. **Foziya** along with her youngest sister is living with her mother in her maternal grandparents house. That five room house accommodates four families including the three families of her maternal uncle's.

While her younger sister, who was 10 year old, would go to school, **Foziya** and her mother worked on *shawls* to keep the family running. Both of them work with hook on shawls. Her mother earned about Rs. 1500/- per month, **Foziya** earned Rs. 800-1000 per month. She was paid in terms of Tola. One tola is equivalent to 10 grams of thread (staple). For every Tola she is paid Rs. 40-50. Out of her own earnings she spent a part of it on her clothes which she was fond of and gave rest to her mother. She did not want to work on shawls, but worked out of sheer necessity and compulsion. She did embroidery slower than her mother, therefore, earned less than her. She spent 10 hours a day on handicraft work. She cleaned the house which took her

around one hour daily. Rest of the time she watched TV and loved to chat with her cousins, who lived in the same house.

Foziya was less burdened with work as compared to other artisan women, because her mother did all the domestic work and she only provided a helping hand and that too occasionally. Regarding discrimination between man and woman, she said that boys enjoy more liberty and were allowed to take independent decisions. They were not accountable to any one. She cited example of her mother and said, “my father not only spoiled my mother's life, but also deprived his children from being together and share the pleasures of a complete family”. She further said that every woman should have some vocational training so that she could sustain herself if she was left alone. She reiterated the economic independence of a woman. However, she felt, “it is unfortunate that women even today are discriminated and paid less as compared to their male counterparts. Still she believes that handicraft industry in Kashmir is most suitable for the women to earn in order to be economically independent.

Conclusion

These individual case histories confirm our findings from quantitative analysis. The main conclusions one can draw from these cases are:

1. The artisan women mostly come from lower economic and educational background.
2. Artisan women do the handicraft work due to economic necessity. When male members earn less, then it is the responsibility of a woman to supplement and raise the economic status of the family.
3. The day in a life of most of the artisan women is quite hectic. Her domestic and handicraft work goes on simultaneously and she hardly finds anytime to rest.
4. Women are aware about their exploitation and inadequate wages, but cannot stop work as it is important and vital for their very sustenance.

A brief about the workers, the middlemen and the trader

The handicraft industry of Jammu & Kashmir is famous world over. Its use is not only limited to India or Indian market, but is fully integrated in the world market. Our study of the handicraft industry would be incomplete without an understanding of its working pattern. The women who are the real producers are linked to the world market through various channels. First there are agents, then the bigger merchants and the bigger merchants in turn are connected to exporters.

The most direct and visible contact the artisan women have is with the agents. These agents are of two types – the smaller and the bigger. The smaller agents were originally themselves the head craft-masters and used to run a small centre, where 20 to 30 girls used to learn the craft. These girls would also work on selected handicrafts and get paid for their work. The craft master used to pay them on daily basis and used to earn some profit out of their work. Since

the people now hardly send their girls to such centres, therefore, these craft-masters have invested from Rs. 5000 to 1,00,000 in purchasing raw material etc. and give it to women for embroidery work, spinning etc. The women take this work home and are paid wages according to the quantity and quality of work they do. The small agents at times do the handicraft work themselves as well, if they have time. Usually they do it for 2-3 hours daily. The bigger agents too were originally craft-masters, but due to their extended business, none of them is involved in actual production now. They have turned into material suppliers to the small agents and artisan women and are whole sale dealers for the exporters.

Both the big and small agents visit the artisan women at their residences, give them raw material, collect the products and give them wages. Some of the artisan women themselves go to the agent's house to get raw material. The agent's earnings are totally based on the difference between the wages he gives to the artisan woman and the wages he gets from the merchant or the exporter for his product. So he is always making the efforts to keep the wages of artisan woman as low as possible. For this they always exploit the poor artisans and use different tactics. For example, telling

the artisans that the market is down; their work is not very neat; or the *pashmina* threads are thick and not properly spun, etc.

While the agents blame the artisan woman for not finishing the work well in time, the artisan women blame them for not increasing their wages. Some of the agents revealed to the researcher that male artisans are paid Rs. 5-6 more than the female artisans because their embroidery work is better and more clean. They further said that if they get a photograph for a new design, women couldn't make the designs by simply looking at the photograph, while a male can. They, therefore, need a sample and that sample always is done by a male artisan. However, most of the women artisans do not know about this.

These agents further revealed that they give work to more women than men, which simply means there are more women artisans. When asked to state the reasons for giving more work to woman than men, they said that their wages are lower than male artisans, therefore, their savings are higher. Secondly, the men cannot afford to work on such low wages. A woman artisan after doing handicraft work for 11 hours can hardly earn Rs. 2000 a month. Since woman do it

at home while doing their other domestic activities, it is a good leisure time activity for them.

These agents have their own association, who meet once or twice in six months. The wages and other things are decided by the association. The agents then sell their products to big merchants or directly to the exporters. The big merchants have business in lakhs and usually own shop/shops in different parts of India, but most of them do not possess the export license. They also sell their products to exporters who later on bring it in the world market.

The women artisans are the real workers, the agents, merchants and the exporters are the exploiters. All of them take their share of exploitation. The agents share is also limited. Big merchants and the exporters are the real beneficiaries.

CHAPTER - IV

Conclusion

CONCLUSION

The economy of Kashmir is based on handicraft and agricultural sectors. Handicraft industry provides employment to around 3 lakh artisans. However, the total ratio of females vis-a-vis males is not known. There are certain crafts in which men are predominant and certain crafts in which women are predominant. The industry is an export-oriented industry. The present study was an effort to throw some light on this export-oriented industry in which the women earn their livelihood within the four walls of their home.

The study was conducted in Srinagar the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir. Srinagar as per 1981 census has a population of 708328 lacs in which 378189 lacs are males and 330139 lacs are females. Around 80% of the population is urban in character. Srinagar was chosen as the locale of the study as the handicraft industry chiefly rests in Srinagar. The study made an humble attempt to highlight the role women play in handicraft sector. Their socio-economic and demographic characteristics, their educational background, nature and type of work done by them, their earnings and expenditures, their perceptions and aspirations, their

problems and prospects and above all their contributions to family and society at large were some of the objectives the study was focused at. To assess these objectives certain hypothetical presuppositions were also made. The study is exploratory in nature. Both the quantitative analysis and the presentation of some case studies were marshaled to support the hypothetical pre-suppositions.

A summary of all the findings and the conclusions which emerge from them are being outlined as hereunder:

1.1 An analysis of the demographic features of the artisan women permitted us to classify them in different age groups. The analysis revealed that the lower age limit among unmarried artisan women was 15 years and among married artisan women it was 25 years. Majority of unmarried female artisans 59.25% was in the age of 15-20 years and majorities of the married female artisans 50% were in the age group of 26-45 year.

The conclusion, which can be drawn from this, are that there is no upper or lower age limit for these artisan women. It all depends on their struggle for survival. Once they attain the age of puberty, they get involved in the handicraft work.

The analysis of the marital status of the respondents revealed that 56.84% of the respondents were unmarried and, 36.31% were married and the rest were either widows, divorcees or separated. That means the sample comprised of more of unmarried artisan women rather than married ones. However, the case studies disclosed that married women and unmarried women were equal in number.

The marital status and age of the respondents was not a criterion for the analysis of the data, however, it was taken into account wherever a difference was found between the married and unmarried artisan women's responses.

1.2 The analysis of the educational level of artisan women revealed that illiterate artisan women outnumbered the literate artisan women. The percentage of illiterate married women artisans was higher 87.80% as compared to unmarried ones, which was 51.85%. A disparity in the educational level of married and unmarried female artisans was also registered, as the educational level of unmarried artisan women was comparatively higher than the married artisan women.

The disparity in the literacy levels of married and unmarried artisans is due to the fact that with every

passing decade the importance of women's education is being realized, and more and more people are sending their daughters to schools. This is further substantiated by the fact that among artisan women the lower the age of the respondent, the higher is the educational level of the respondent.

1.3 To know the socio-economic and educational background of the artisan women, the following aspects were examined. The married artisan women were asked about their husbands and unmarried artisan women about their parents.

1.3.a The study revealed that among the artisan women's husbands 63.41% were illiterate and among the unmarried artisan women's parents 75.29% fathers and 100% mothers were illiterate.

1.3.b Since the majority of respondents' husbands or parents were illiterate, the analysis, therefore, showed that majority of them were involved in such professions, which did not require much educational qualifications. The artisan women's parents/husbands worked as artisans, businessmen, drivers, labourers, shop-keepers, private employees and menial or ministerial govt. employees such as peons and clerks. When the unmarried artisan women were asked about their mother's profession, majority of

them said they were not involved in any economic activity other than domestic chores. Only 42% respondents mothers were "Artisans" by profession.

1.3.c The income of the majority of respondent's husbands/fathers was noted to be between Rs. 1000-3000. The income of the unmarried respondent's mothers was even lower than this. It was below Rs. 1000 in majority of the cases. About 7.3% of the married artisan women didn't know about the total earnings of their husbands.

1.3.d In order to probe how many members of a particular family worked together to supplement or to raise the economic position of that family, the respondents were asked about the total number of male/female earning members. Majority of the families 65.78% had only one male-earning member. This is because of the fact that majority of the families were nuclear in character. However, with regard to total number of female earning members, a wide gap was found between married and unmarried artisan women. The majority of the married artisan women 65.85% had only one female earning member and majority of the unmarried artisan women 68.51% had two female earning members. That the more female earning members in the family raise the overall economic strength of the family is substantiated by the

fact that the total income of these families was enhanced. For example, majority of the female artisan's (both married and unmarried) fathers/husbands income group was between Rs. 1000-3000. The analysis of the respondents income from all sources disclosed a disparity between married and unmarried female artisans. This is due to the fact that majority of unmarried artisan women have two or more female earning members. Therefore, majority of the married respondents 37.80% belonged to the income group of Rs. 3001-5000 and 50.92% unmarried respondents belonged to the income group of Rs. 5001-7000 per month. This proves our hypothesis that the female earnings do enhance the overall economic status of the family.

1.4 The striking feature of traditional Indian society i.e. joint family system has almost lost its relevance as 87.89% respondents in our sample lived in nuclear type of families. Out of which 90% live under same roof with separate kitchen and can best be called as extended nuclear families. One important point with regard to female artisans is that majority of them were aware about the advantages of smaller families. 55.78% had 3-4 family members. Only 7.36% respondents did live in large families comprising of 9-10 members. These cases

were of those respondents who belonged to joint family system.

1.5 To examine the power structure of the respondent's families, the artisan women were asked about the head of their respective families. Majorities of the female artisan's 72.63% families were headed by a male. The remaining 27.36% household were headed by the female. But this should not lead us to the conclusion that the patriarchal power structure in these families has changed. The females heading the households were either widows, divorcees or separated. Very few females living with their husbands claimed to be the heads of their families. However, even in these households they had to play second fiddle to their husbands. The crucial economic and financial matters had to be decided in consultation with their husbands.

The above findings confirm certain key features in our hypotheses, e.g. the artisan woman come from lower socio-economic and educational background, their educational level is quite low and the overall earnings of these women enhance the overall economic position of their respective families. An overview of the case studies presented in chapter 4 Part II also confirm the above findings.

2.1 The handicrafts of Kashmir are famous world over. The handicrafts of Kashmir consist of a variety of crafts. The study revealed that female artisans were basically involved in the embroidery part of the crafts or in spinning operations. The female artisans were involved in the embroidering of the following crafts : *Namdha*, *crewel*, *chainstick* and *shawl*. In addition to this women were also involved in *pashmina* and *shahtoosh* spinning and the art of paper machine. Besides these crafts the artisan women were also involved in carpet weaving. However, their ratio in the urban Srinagar is almost negligible. Their concentration is mostly in the rural areas of Srinagar district. Majorities of the female artisans have learnt their professional skill from their family members.

2.2 The female artisan's dividends are very meagre in view of the amount of labour they put in. Majority of the artisan women earned Rs. 501 to 1000 per month. The second highest percentage of women artisans 21.57% earned between Rs. 1001 to 1500 per month.

2.3 Almost all the women artisans contributed their income towards their families in one or the other way. Majority of the married women 58.53% spent their earnings for the very sustenance of their families. Also a considerable percentage of married respondents 21.95%

saved their earnings. However, they saved considerable amount of money which was later on handed over to the husband with a view to meet out some exigency or purchase some consumer durables. Among the unmarried women artisans again 35.81% gave away all their earnings to the family. 24.07% saved their earnings and 20.37% spent on personal needs. These women revealed that they didn't want to be a burden on their otherwise poor families. They wanted to help their parents by looking after their own needs. Some female artisan 16.66% also contributed a part of their income to their family besides meeting their own personal expenditure.

All these artisan women worked either to supplement their family income or to act as sole breadwinners of their family. Where the male members earned less, it is the responsibility of the women to earn in order to supplement and raise the economic position of the family. Sharma, 1986¹ broadly defines three different kinds of domestic situations in which a woman can find herself.

(a) A sole wage earner, also responsible for domestic arrangements;

Sharma, Ursula, *Women's Work, Class and the Urban Household*, Tavistock Publications Ltd., London, 1986.,

(b) a sole organizer of domestic arrangements, in some cases also contributing part of the household income, and

(c) as one of the larger team of people among whom the responsibilities for domestic work and for bringing in income may be divided in a number of ways.

The above classifications can easily be applied to the present study, the extracts of 3 of the case studies explain as to how the above classification is relevant to the present study.

Tawheeda case no. 6 in Chapter 4 (part II) worked on *Namdba*. Both her father and mother were not keeping a good health, so both of them did not earn anything. Her two brothers had done graduation and were yet unemployed. Tawheeda and her younger sister were the only two bread winning members of the family. Tawheeda and her sister worked for 18 hours a day and spent 10 hours on handicraft work and rest of the time in looking after domestic chores, taking care of their parents etc. They also make balls out of the woolen yarn with which they had to do embroidery the other day. The whole family was economically dependent on the earnings of these two sisters.

Aisha (case no. 1), is a widow and had five daughters and a 10 year old son. The family was run on the meagre income of

Aisha and her three daughters. Aisha spined *Pashmina* and earned Rs. 500 per month besides doing all the household work.

Gulshan case no. 7 worked on crewel. She earned around Rs. 800 per month. Since the total income of her parents was around Rs. 4000 per month, **Gulshan** earned for her own expenditure and also at times contributed a part of it to the family besides sharing domestic work with her sister and mother.

2.4 The wage pattern of artisan woman revealed that majorities of them were paid on piece rate basis 59.47% and 39.47% gave varied responses. Actually the wage pattern of one craft is different from another, craft. For example, *chainstich* wages are given on the basis of per square feet, *shawls* are paid on the basis of *Tola* - (one *Tola* is equivalent to 10- grams of staple), *Crewel* is paid on the basis per kg woolen yarn etc. The field survey revealed that a great disparity existed between the wage pattern of artisan women. The wages of the artisan women were not only less than the male artisans, but also a variation was found between the wages of one artisan woman from another. On demanding wages at par with men, the artisan women were often rebuffed by being told that men's work was often neater and up to the mark of perfection. However, the field survey could not establish this argument. It seems that in view of the male monopoly

of the trade, men succeed in circumventing the demand by female artisans for higher wages by manipulating such stereotypes. Secondly, since the middleman's earnings depend on the difference between the wages they pay to the artisan women and the selling price of the product, they devise tricks to underpay the poor artisan women. This is probably one of the reasons for not only the low wages of artisan women, but also for the intra-artisan variation in wages. The study, however, revealed that though the earnings of these middlemen are not high, it was definitely much higher than the artisan women. The loin's share is appropriated by big dealers and exporters.

2.5 The artisan women were aware that the wages they were getting for a particular job were low. Majority of the respondents 78.42% said that wages were inadequate, 15.26% said they were adequate and another 6.3% were not able to say anything in this regard. On being asked as to why did they work on low wages, on aggregate, majority of them said that they didn't have anything better to rely on. However, while analyzing the difference between the responses of married and unmarried respondents, it was found that this reason operated more prominently in case of unmarried women 57.14% than the married respondents who asserted that the

money was badly required in view of the domestic compulsions. So, they had no option other than to work on low wages. These responses particularly of married artisan women bring forth an important dimension, i.e. the Islamic law which assign the role of a breadwinner to a man and also makes him responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of his wife and children is least followed among the patriarchal families of these poor artisan women. Their earnings even if meager form an important part of family income and are, thus, essential for the very sustenance of their families. While discussing the issue of working on low wages, some of the artisan women said:

"We have to depend on the good will middleman. If he deceives us, we can't help it. If we bargain with him, he will stop assigning any work to us and will give it to other artisan women. We have no way to keep control over him. We cannot show or organise any kind of resistance against their exploitation as we don't have any kind of organisation or association. In fact, any organised effort against this exploitative mechanism, is difficult to sustained any organized effort against this exploitation in view of the fact that we hardly venture out of our homes. Only if we could unionize or put up a front against this exploitation".

2.6 In order to gain information about various types of activities and time they spend both on handicraft

work and housework, a list of all the activities of artisan women as well as time they spend on these activities was formulated and analyzed. Their statements revealed that a working day of an artisan woman consisted of a variety of activities most of which fall under the category of housework. These activities include cooking food, cleaning house, washing clothes, washing utensils, serving the family, child-care, ironing the clothes, attending and serving the guests etc., in addition to handicraft work. There did not exist any demarcation among these activities, which usually overlapped each other. An extract of Case no. 8 would shed some light on the different activities of an artisan woman in a day:

Tanveera who was 23 years of age had lost her parents. She was the only sister of her three brothers. She was, therefore, responsible for all the domestic chores. She would get up at 6 in the morning. After taking bath she would offer prayers and then prepare breakfast, tea etc. for the family. She would cook meals and then cleans the house. She would also wash and also cleans utensils. She would finish her household work by 11 A.M. After that she would work on *Shawls* till her brothers would come back from work. In between she would take lunch break for half an hour at 1 O' clock and again would engage in handicraft work till her brothers come back from work in the evening around 7. p.m. In the evening she would make tea,

snakes and serve to her brothers. She would also make evening meals. She again started working on shawls. After serving dinner she would wash utensils and cleanse the kitchen. In the late evenings she would iron the clothes. She would go to bed usually around 11.30 P.M."

2.7 An analysis of the hours of work done by women revealed that the average hours of married artisan women were more than their unmarried counterparts. Majority of the married artisans spent a total of 13 to 18 hours on different activities. Majority of the unmarried artisan women spent 9 to 11 hours per day on different activities. Regarding the hours of time spent on handicraft work, majority of married artisan women 31.70% spent 8-9 hours on handicraft work and another 23.17% spend 10-11 hours on the said work whereas among the unmarried female artisans majority 40.74% spent only 6-7 hours on handicraft and 24.07% spent 4-5 hours. This is the reason that unmarried artisan women have more leisure time than the married ones. The time spent on handicraft work varied firstly according to the overall economic status of the family. Where the economic status of the family was low, the women used to work hard on handicraft work for raising additional money. Secondly, some women worked for lesser hours, but earned more as they could do the embroidery work quite fast. Thirdly, the time spent on

handicraft work as well as on household work depended on the number of women and girls in a given household. However, an analysis of the hours spent on handicraft and other activities by majority of artisan women are equivalent to a factory worker and it is naive to call them as house-wives and not as 'workers'.

2.8 32.92% of the married women artisans didn't find any leisure time, whereas 12.96% unmarried artisan women found no leisure time. However, the average hours of leisure-time of unmarried respondents were much higher as compared to married artisan women. Majority of the married respondents spent their leisure time by taking a nap after lunch. However, unmarried artisans relaxed, chatted, watched TV etc.

2.9 When the respondents were asked about the amount of leisure time they got, initially 60% said they got lot of time. But when the researcher probed deeper in this regard a different story was disclosed. What they called leisure time was not a "leisure" in actual terms, but the time when they did embroidery or spinning, in fact the handicraft work. This shows that they themselves had internalised the common ideology of their work being no work in the real sense. After a lot of discussion between the researcher and artisan women regarding the importance

of their earnings for the sustenance of their families they also accepted that their work was not a leisure time activity.

2.10 A great difference was found between the responses of married and unmarried artisan women vis-a-vis managing household responsibilities. Since majority of the married respondents belonged to nuclear form of family, so majority of them 68.29% manage the household responsibilities alone and again majority of them 85.36% took care of their children themselves. There is a very small percentage 4.87% of female artisans who would get help in childcare from their husbands and other 7.31% respondents would get help from mothers-in-law.

2.11 Among the unmarried respondents majority 66.66 provide a helping hand to family members, that means housework is none of their responsibility, they render some help only if they wish to do so. However, 24.07% shared work with relatives. There is a very small percentage of unmarried artisan women (1.85%) who manage the household alone. They were usually those who had either lost their mothers or had sick mothers. Like most of the working women who go out of their home to work, majority of the artisan women said that they are experiencing fatigue because of the demands of their dual

role. The proportion of married artisan women 75.60% who experienced various degrees of fatigue was higher than the unmarried ones (40.47%). However, 57.40% unmarried respondents mentioned that they didn't feel overburdened.

2.12 In the Kashmiri society, the going out of women from their homes quite often is not a welcome feature. This is particularly true of those women who are not involved in some gainful employment outside their home. Since all these artisan women are involved in home based industry, so they hardly go for outings. The study revealed that these women went out only when an important piece of work was to be attended to. Their outings include going to the nearby market for buying personal things or grocery items, visiting their relatives or attending marriages/funerals etc. Though the scenic beauty of Kashmir is famous world over, but these artisan women have hardly visited any tourist spot except one or two visits to Mughal gardens in their lifetime or occasional visits to Muslim shrines. The unmarried artisan women relatively went out more frequently than their married counterparts. 37.03% went out once a week, a 27.77% once a month. 31.70% married artisan women go out occasionally

2.13 Paradoxically enough, although majority of the female artisans did express satisfaction with their job, yet at the same time most of them wanted to change it as well. They wanted to go in for such jobs as would fetch them more money. A considerable percentage of unmarried artisan women 13.67% mentioned that they would give up their handicraft work, if after marriage the income of the husband was reasonably good or if the husband/in-laws objected to it.

2.14 The study further revealed the multifarious factors which have motivated the artisan women to be in the handicraft work. Their views can easily be related with their responses as to how did they spend their earnings. As majority of the artisan women give all their earnings to their families., so the majority too reported that their motivation to be in handicraft sector was to raise the economic status of the family. The increasing trend particularly among young generation to be economically independent is substantiated by the fact that 37.07% unmarried artisan women worked to have an independent income.

2.15 A number of studies have shown that employment increased the decision-making role of a woman. The present study indicated that 39.02% married

artisan women did take an active part in respect of daily expenditures, education of children, marriage of children, purchase of real estate etc. However, 36.58% reported that their consent was sought, and another 24.39% reported that they did not take any part in any decision making. Whereas among unmarried artisan women 25% took part in the above decisions, 56.43% didn't take any part. The artisan women who did take decisions however revealed that the ultimate authority lies with the male i.e. husband/brother/father etc. They decide only relatively minor matters, which are mostly related to domestic chores. Regarding the other vital decisions, 'he' is the deciding factor.

2.16 It is quite axiomatic from our quantitative analysis of artisan women's work and family and from the illustrations of some of the case studies that the artisan women of Kashmir are a highly exploited lot. "Though the fact of exploitation is an open and stark reality, it is not easy to measure it in clear economic terms. The whole system of production and distribution is organised in such a way that a clear calculation of the costs of production and the extent of exploitation is hardly possible. The reason for this is not only the fact that the exporters carefully hide the figures about their profits, but also the typically hidden, unorganised and deliberately

confused way by which capital accumulation takes place in this industry. The main reason for their confusion is the fact that lace work (here it is applied to handicraft work) is defined as non-work or housework"². The analysis further revealed that the income of these artisan women is used for the survival of the family. Additionally, her domestic chores are so arduous, inspite of all this, she gets no recognition for any of her roles.

3.1 Men enjoy more liberty, they are free to do whatever they feel like, they do not need any one's consent. A woman has no right to decide. Before marriage she is subservient to her father/brother and after marriage she is under the control of her husband and in-laws. Girl child's birth is not a welcome feature, because she is to be protected. She cannot take up those jobs, which a male can take and earn livelihood. These were some of the justifications, which the female artisans gave with regard to gender-discrimination. On being asked, whether discrimination of woman vis-a-vis man did exist or not, majority of the female artisans 61.05% replied in affirmative, 14.73% replied in negative and another 24.21% could not speak any thing in this regard. Extract from case no. 8 regarding discrimination of women vis-a-vis men.

² Mies, Maria, *The Lace Makers Of Narsapur*, Zed Press, London, 1982.

"Tanveera was not able to say whether she enjoyed equality vis-a-vis her brothers, and further said, though it is difficult to say whether a girl child is discriminated or not in comparison to a male child, but parents do not believe and trust their daughters the way they believe in and trust their sons. In a family a woman has no right to decide. Her opinion is always considered as a stupid remark".

3.2 The perceptions and aspirations of female artisan women are changing with changing times. The younger generation artisan women have developed a more egalitarian outlook. This is amply substantiated by the fact that 76.85% of the unmarried artisan women said that husband and wife should enjoy equal status in the family and in the society. Only 23.15% of them said that husband should have a higher status than his wife. The study revealed that none of the un-married respondents advocated a higher status for a woman than her husband. However, among the married respondents 60.97% stated that husband should have a higher status and 2.43% stated that wife should have a higher status than her husband.

3.3 On being asked as to whether there are more job opportunities for a man than a woman, majority of the respondents revealed that both of them have equal opportunities provided they possess educational and

technical excellence. Further, the artisan women while commenting on the jobs that are easier for a woman of their educational and technical qualifications to get, majority of them stated that the handicraft work in which they were involved is the best way for a woman to earn a livelihood in a more dignified way. This work can be easily done by them within the four walls of their house, without roaming around in search of a job from door to door.

3.4 When the artisan women were asked as to whether they would like their sons/daughters to do the same job i.e. handicraft work, majority of them replied in negative. There 'No' always came in a louder voice. Majority of them wished their children to attain high education and further opined that their future will be decided by God, fate, destiny etc. This shows that an attitudinal change is registered towards the women's education. While expressing the importance of education, these women talked about the problems which they were facing without education in day to day life. For example they cannot help their children in their studies, cannot read or remember the names of medicines and keep the records etc. They wished that their children should get

education so that they do not face the problems, which their illiterate parents are facing.

3.5 The study revealed that the female artisans are very much aware about their rights especially their property rights and *Mehr* (dower). Besides their awareness they were also knowing about the share to which they are entitled. Though Islamic law provides 1/3rd of the property share to a woman in comparison to her brother, in Kashmiri Muslim society the customary law is most prevalent. The customary law neither prohibits, nor approves of a woman taking share of her parental property. This is substantiated by the fact that majority of the married artisan women 84.14% had not taken their share in parental property. These artisan women when asked as to why they have not taken their share from their parental property, majority of them mentioned that they did not want to have strained relations with their brothers. Only 20% of them said that the property was yet to be divided and another 10% of them said that their husband's property was sufficient for their family. With regard to *Mehr* 73.17% married respondents have not been paid their *Mehr* by their respective husbands. In the payment of *Mehr* too the customary law is followed. The question of inheritance rights and right to dower money was discussed

with the unmarried respondents as well. Their responses showed a change in their perceptions in comparison to their married counterparts. 50% of them wished to follow the customary law and another 50% stated that women should claim their property share even if it means straining relations with their brothers. They further revealed that unless a woman asserts for her rights she won't be given her due share. If the women keep on claiming their rights, a time will come when things will be settled in a peaceful manner. Regarding the payment of *Mehr* all the unmarried respondents stated that it should be paid at the time of marriage itself.

Significance of the Study

The present study falls within the sociology of women and sociology of work. Its main objective was to give a sociological outline of the household work carried out by female artisans of Srinagar. While sociology of women is a vital emerging area of sociological inquiry and is an inter-continental or global phenomenon, localized, empirical studies provide vital feedback to the overall theoretical formulations. Only by pooling together empirical area studies, can we hope to arrive at a judicious and balanced theoretical perspective on sociology of

women. Therefore, firstly, the present study may be deemed to be a humble contribution to the sociology of women's work. Secondly, a crucial objective of the present study may be said to be highlighting the invisibility phenomenon of women's work. The general perception that the urban women are parasites on the economy needs to be dismantled. Hopefully, the present study on the female artisans of Srinagar would be a contribution towards bringing out the economic role urban women are playing in our times. It is further hoped that the present work should also persuade the planners not to subsume the women's work under the general rubric of housework. The present work must also underline the need for persistent research to evolve methods and techniques of quantifying women's work, especially in the domestic sector. The significance and relevance of the study will be proportionate to the extent it draws our attention towards these objectives.

Suggestions and Recommendation

1. The present study has tried to investigate from a sociological viewpoint, the conditions of female artisans of Srinagar. The frame of reference of this study was to sociologically evaluate their role and contribution to the family as well as society. Other such empirical studies

need to be done concentrating on other relevant variables in this regard.

2. In view of the fact that there is no statistical data available on women's work, especially on handicraft sector, the planners and statisticians of Jammu & Kashmir government must evolve mechanisms that can be instrumental in providing us vital classified information on multiple aspects of women's work including handicraft work.

3. The definition of a worker needs to be drastically revised. Women working in household industries should not conveniently be deemed to be housewives, but defined as workers. Housework should be defined as work.

4. Researchers and planners should consistently and persistently try to devise methods of evaluating women's involvement in home-based industries so that their contribution can be made visible and quantifiable.

5. Discrimination in wages on the basis of sex should be abolished. The government can put reasonable checks to the capricious behaviour of middlemen who underpay women artisans, try to grab profits

disproportionate to their effort and often work as the agents of big dealers and exporters.

6. Female artisans in handicraft sector and their counter parts in other sectors should be organised so that a united struggle can be launched against exploitation.

7. Female artisans should be persuaded to set up handicraft worker's co-operative societies. Such an arrangement may minimize the exploitative role of middlemen.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

A Sociological Study of Women Artisans of Srinagar

1. Name
2. Age
3. Marital status Married/ unmarried
4. Qualification
5. Husband's Education
6. Husband's Occupation
7. Husband's income
8. If Unmarried
 9. Fathers Education
 10. Fathers Income
 11. Mothers Education
 12. Mothers Income
13. Total No. of male earning members
14. Total No. of female earning members
15. Total family income from all sources
16. Type of family Joint Nuclear
17. Family size
 18. No. of males.
 19. No. of females
 20. No of Children Male Children Female Children
21. Who is the head of the family?

Father/ Mother/ other
22. Mention the handicraft item in which you are engaged.
23. What type of work you do.
24. From where did you get professional skill for this job.

From family members/ From training centre/ friend-neighbour/
other source (specify)

25. How much do you earn per month.

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| a) Below 500 | b) 500-1000 |
| c) 1001-1500 | d) 1501-2000 |
| e) 2001-2500 | f) any other |

26. Do you.

- a. Save all the income
- b. Give away all to the family
- c. Contribute a part of it to the family
- d. Spent on personal expenditures.
- e. Any other.

27. What is the mode of payment of wages to you.

- A. on piece-rate basis
- B. weekly basis
- C. other, specify

28. Do you think that the wages given to you are adequate?

- | | | |
|-----|----|------------|
| Yes | No | Cannot Say |
|-----|----|------------|

29. What wages do you consider adequate given for such work in your area.

30. What makes you to work on such low wage rates?

- ☐ Availability of more artisan women in your area.
- ☐ Money badly required for family
- ☐ Nothing better available
- ☐ Any Other (Specify)

31. How many hours do you work per day on an average?

6hours / 9hours other, specify

32. What is the average number of hours per day you spend on:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| a) Household activities | b) Cooking food. |
| c) Washing clothes | d) Cleaning house |
| e) Handicraft work. | f) Any other. |

33. Please give the details:-

☐ Time at which work starts everyday.....

34. Time at which work ends everyday.....

35. How many hours of leisure do you have per day?

1/2 hrs./ 1-2hrs / 2-3hrs / other (specify)

36. How do you spend this leisure time.

☐ Visit your friends.

☐ Go to the market.

☐ Take a nap or relax.

☐ Relax, chat, watch TV etc.

☐ Other (specify)

37. Do you think that by being in this work, it has over burdened you.

Yes/no/ do not know.

38. How do you manage your household responsibilities.

☐ Alone

☐ Sharing with relatives.

☐ Sharing with husband.

☐ Render a helping hand.

39. Who takes care of your children when you are at work.

Self / Mother in law / other

40. Do you think that by being so engrossed in your, work, your children are neglected?

Yes / No/ Can't Say

41. If yes, do you think that it has bad effect on the health and studies of your children. Yes / No / Can't Say

42. Are you able to spare time towards the other social responsibilities of the family?

Yes / No/ Can't No

43. How often do you go for outings with your family members?

Once in a Week / Month / Other Specify

44. Are your family members satisfied with your work ?

Yes / No / Can't Say

45. What motivated you to be in this profession.

- a. Gross necessity
- b. To supplement family income and raise the economic status
- c. To have an independent income
- d. Engagement for spare time.
- e. To escape from domestic chores.
- f. Any other (specify).....

If unmarried;

46. Do you work in order to raise money for dowry. Yes/ No/ Indifferent

47. Have you saved any money for the dowry. Yes / No / Indifferent

48. Do you want to change or give up your job.

Yes / No/ Can't Say

49 If yes for what reasons:-

- ☐ Lesser hours of work.
- ☐ If the family income increases by any other source.
- ☐ Get a better job
- ☐ After the marriage if the income of the husband is satisfactory
- ☐ After marriage if the husband or in laws object.
- ☐ Other (specify)

50. Do you think that women are discriminated in the family visa vis man.

Yes / No / Can't Say

Give rationale

.....

51. Do you enjoy equality of status within the family?

Yes/ No/ Can't Say

52. Do you have a say in taking decision in respect of:-

- ☐ Daily expenditure (meant for household expense)
- ☐ Education of children.
- ☐ Schooling of children.
- ☐ Marriage of children.
- ☐ Selection of jobs.

53. In your family who controls the familial income other than that meant for household expenditure?

- ☐ Husband/ father controls the money matters
- ☐ You have a say in money matters.
- ☐ You are in-charge of active finance.

54. Do you think that.

- ☐ Wife should have higher status than husband.
- ☐ Husband should have higher status than wife.
- ☐ There should be equal status for both husband and wife.

55. Are you satisfied with your occupation?

Yes/ No/ Partially

If No

What occupation will you prefer?

56. What factors would have helped you to get a better job.

- ☐ Being educated.
- ☐ Being technically qualified.
- ☐ Other, Specify

57. Do you think there are more job opportunities:

for men / for women / for both

58. What are the jobs that are easy to get for women of your qualifications?

59. Do you expect your daughter to do the same job?

Yes / No / Can't Say

60. What do you expect your son will do?

61. Did you get the share from your parental property?

Yes / No/ Can't Say

If No; Why.....

.....

62. Did your husband pay you Mehar?

Yes / No / Cant Say

63. If No Why ?

.....

Thank you